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# EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

( Revised & Enlarged )



BY

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Towns and Cities in Gujrat and Kathiawar, History of the Village Communities in Western India and History of Banaras are out of print.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Considerable changes have been made in *Education in Ancient India* while presenting its second edition to the public. The first edition was in the form of a research work primarily intended for the students of Ancient Indian History and Culture. The reception that was given to it, however, showed that the general public was also interested in the subject and would welcome its presentation in a less technical and more popular form. Several Universities prescribed the work as one of the text-books for the paper dealing with the History of Indian Education at the B. T. examination, and it appeared that the teachers and students of the Training Colleges would welcome the treatment of the subject matter of the book, not only from the point of the orientalist but also from that of the educationalist. Further thought given to the subject also showed that a few more topics should be included in the book in order to make the treatment complete and comprehensive.

A considerable portion of the book has, therefore, been entirely rewritten for the second edition. Technical and detailed discussions have been transferred to foot-notes and appendices. A new appendix (appendix V) has been added, which explains technical terms and gives the dates of authors, works, kings and travellers incidentally referred to in the work. It is hoped that this appendix will give a proper chronological background to readers not acquainted with ancient Indian political and cultural history.

While rewriting the book the view point of the educationalist has also been constantly kept before the mind. The treatment is more comparative than was the case in the first edition; the views and theories of Greek and Roman thinkers and medieval and modern educationalists have been referred to, wherever necessary, for a compara-

tive estimate. Particular attention has been given to the method of teaching and curricula that prevailed in the different periods of Ancient Indian History.

The first edition began with the chapter on Educational Rituals. As this topic is not of particular interest either to the educationalist or to the general reader, it has been transferred to the end of the book as Appendix I. The book now opens with a discussion of the Conception and Ideals of Education, the section on the Conception of Education being entirely new. The second chapter which deals with some Educational Principles and Postulates is substantially new. It is hoped that students of education will find it to be a very useful back-ground for the study of ancient Indian education. Its concluding section, dealing with the caste system and education, will give information about the social life in ancient India sufficient to understand the educational problems. The next chapter dealing with the Teacher and the Student presents in a succinct form the information given in chapters II and III of the first edition. Chapter IV dealing with Educational Organisation and Finance is to a great extent a new addition, and it is hoped that the educationalist as well as the orientalist will find here a good deal of new and interesting information on the subject. The concluding portion of the chapter dealing with the Educational Finance is based upon the chapter on Society, State and Education of the first edition. The next five chapters dealing with some Educational Centres, Higher Education, Primary Education, Professional and Useful Education and Female Education occurred in the first edition, but they have been revised, rearranged and rewritten in a more succinct form for this edition.

Chapter X, which gives a General Resume of the subject, is a new addition. The line of treatment so far followed in the book isolated the different topics like Primary Education, Female Education, etc., and traced their history and development from age to

age. This method of treatment no doubt enables the reader to get a clear idea of the development of each theme, but does not give him the picture of the educational condition as a whole of the different epochs of Indian History. The new chapter seeks to meet this need. In its first section it gives a resume of the contribution of the Buddhism to Ancient Indian Education and in its second section it gives a bird's-eye view of the general educational condition and achievements of each of the four succeeding epochs into which Ancient Indian History has been divided for this purpose. It is hoped that both the student and the general reader will find this chapter very useful. This edition like the first one concludes with a discussion of the achievements and failures of Ancient Indian Education.

Appendix I deals with different educational rituals discussed in Chapter I of the first edition. Appendices II and III are identical with Appendices A and B of the first edition. Appendices IV and V are practically speaking new. They explain some technical expressions and supply dates of kings, authors and travellers, referred to in the work.

It is hoped that the second edition of 'Education in Ancient India' will make a wide appeal not only to the research workers in indology but also to the general readers and the students of education, and succeed in familiarising them with the main features, ideals and achievements of the Ancient Indian Educational System.

Banaras Hindu University.

10-8-1944

A. S. ALTEKAR.



## PREFACE TO THE 5th EDITION.

I may briefly draw attention to a few changes and additions that have been made in the fifth edition.

In Chapter V, a brief section has been added on Kashmir as a centre of higher education.

The main changes are, however, made in Chapter X. Formerly its first section dealt with the contribution of Buddhism to ancient Indian education. Now this section is expanded into contribution of Buddhism and Jainism and forms an entire Chapter, Chap. X of the new edition.

Section B of Chapter X of the 4th edition gave a period-wise survey of Education in different periods in nine pages. This has been now expanded into 27 pages and forms the concluding chapter of the new edition, namely Chapter XII. Chapter XI in the new edition deals exclusively with Achievements and Failures. Chap. XII in its new expanded form naturally contains some repetitions, but the busy reader, who has time to read the entire book, will find it very useful in giving him a bird's eye view of the entire subject. The present Chapter XII in fact forms the substance of a lecture that I was invited to deliver at Pennsylvania University, U. S. A.

Patna University.

1-3-1957

A. S. Altekar

## PREFACE TO THE 6th. EDITION

This book has been revised fully well and the printing mistakes have been duly rectified.

—Publishers.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLITERATION

### ABBREVIATIONS

A. D. S.	Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra
A. G. S.	Āpastamba Gṛihya Sūtra
A. N.	Aṅguttara Nikāya
Ait. Ar.	Aitareya Āraṇyaka
Alberuni	Sachau, Alberuni's India
Aś. Gr. S.	Aśvalāyana Gṛihya Sūtra
A. S. R.	Archæological Survey of India, Annual Reports, New Series
A. S. W. I.	Archæological Survey of Western India, Reports of
A. V.	Atharvaveda
B. D. S.	Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra
Bau Gr. S.	Baudhāyana Gṛihya Sūtra
Beal, Life.	Life of Hiuen Tsiang
Bh. Gr. S.	Bhāradvāja Gṛihya Sūtra
Br. Up.	Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad
Ch. Up.	Chhāndogya Upanishad
Dr. Gr. S.	Drāhyāyana Gṛihya Sūtra
E. C.	Epigraphia Carnatica
E. I.	Epigraphia Indica
Elliot, History	Elliot's History of India, as told by its historians, Vols. 1-2 London, 1870.
Go. Br.	Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
Go. Gr. S.	Gobhila Gṛihya Sūtra
Hi. Gr. S.	Hiraṇyakesi Gṛihya Sūtra
I. A.	Indian Antiquity
I. M. P.	Inscriptions from Madras Presidency.
I-tsing	Record of the Western World by I-tsing, edited by Takakusu

J. A. S. B.	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal
J.B.B.R.A.S.	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
J. B. O. R. S.	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society
Jai. Gr. S.	Jaimini Gṛihya Sūtra
Jai. Up. Br.	Jaimini Upanishad Brāhmaṇa
K. M.	Kāvyamīmāṃsā
Kh. Gr. S.	Khādīra Gṛihya Sūtra
Kū. P.	Kārma Purāṇa
K. S.	Kāṭhaka Saṁhita
Kss.	Kathāsaritsāgara
K. Up.	Kaṭhupanishad
Ma. Gr. S.	Mānava Gṛihya Sūtra
M. A. S. I.	Memoirs of the Archæological Survey of India
Mbh.	Mahābhārata
Mil. Pan.	Milinda Paṇha ( S. B. E. edition )
M. N.	Majjhima Nikāya
M. S.	Maitrāyaṇīya Saṁhita
Mu. Up.	Muṇḍakopanishad
M. V.	Mahāvagga
N. S.	Nitisataka
P. Gr. S.	Pāraskara Gṛihya Sūtra
Par Ma.	Mādhava's Commentary on Parāśara Smṛiti
P. M.	Pūrva mīmāṃsā
Pr. Up.	Praśnopanishad
R. V.	Ṛig-veda
Sachau	Alberuni's India, edited by Sachau
Śānti P.	Śānti Parvan of the Mahābhārata
Saraṅga P	Saraṅgadhara Paddhati
Ś. Br.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
S. B. E.	Sacred Books of the East Series

SCS.	Smṛitichandrikā, Sanskāra Kāṇḍa
S. I. E. R.	Annual Reports of South Indian Epigraphy.
Tai. Ar.	Taittiriya Āraṇyaka
Tai. Br.	Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa
T. S.	Taittiriya Saṃhitā
Tai. Up.	Taittiriya Upanishad
V. D. S.	Vasishṭha Dharma Sūtra
Va. Gr. S.	Varāha Gr̥hya Sūtra
Vaj, Sam.	Vājasaneyā Saṃhitā
Vi. Dh. S.	Vishṇu Dharma Sūtra or Vishṇu Smṛiti
VMS.	Vjramitrodaya Sanskāra-prakāśa
Watters.	Watters, on Yuan Chwang's Travels
Yaj.	Yājñavalkya-Smṛiti
S. R. S.	Subhāshita-Ratna-Sandoha
S. R. B.	Subhāshita-Ratna-Bhāṇḍāra

### TRANSLITERATION

Current words like Brahmana, Vaishya or Shudra and modern names like Sivaji and Paithan are written usually without diacritical marks.

Sanskrit, Prākṛit and Pāli words are transliterated according to the following scheme :—

आ ā ई ī इ i ऊ ū ऋ ṛि ऋ ṛि विसर्ग ḥ ङ ṅ च ch छ chh ञ ṇ ट ṭ ठ ṭh  
ड ḍ ढ ḍh ए ṇ श ś ष ṣ स s ह h क्ष kṣ ज्ञ jñ.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface ... ..	v
Abbreviations and Transliteration ... ..	ix
Chap. I. The Conception and Ideals of Education ... ..	1
Chap. II. Some Educational Principles and Postulates ... ..	22
Chap. III. The Teacher and the Student ... ..	49
Chap. IV. Educational Organisation and Finance ... ..	73
Chap. V. Some Educational Centres and Institutions ... ..	105
Chap. VI. Higher Literary Education; Curriculum, Method of Teaching and Examination ... ..	145
Chap. VII. Primary Education ... ..	173
Chap. VIII. Professional & Useful Education ... ..	187
Chap. IX. Female Education ... ..	207
Chap. X. Contribution of Buddhism and Jainism... ..	228
Section A—Buddhism and Ancient Indian Education ... ..	228
Section B—Jainism and Ancient Indian Education ... ..	235
Chap. XI. Achievements and Failures ... ..	237
Chap XII. A Historical Survey ... ..	259

## APPENDICES

	PAGE
Appendix I. Educational Rituals	... 288
„ IA Vidyārambha	... 288
„ IB Upanayana	... 291
„ IC College Session Rituals	... 306
„ ) Convocation Ritual	... 311
„ IE Ayurvedic Upanayana	... 313
„ IF Dhanurvedic Upanayana	... 315
„ IG Military Convocation	... 316
Appendix II. Significance of the Sacred Thread...	317
Appendix III. Convocation Addresses	... 323
Appendix IV. Four Vedas, Six Aṅgas, etc.	... 328
Appendix V. Technical Terms and Dates etc.	... 332
Select Bibliography	... 335
Index	... 339

EDUCATION  
IN  
ANCIENT  
INDIA





# EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

## CHAPTER 1.

### THE CONCEPTION AND IDEALS OF EDUCATION.

Importance of the subject—Meaning of education—Education as illumination—As agency of improvement—Its diverse functions—Education not merely book learning—Six aims of education—Infusion of piety—Formation of character—Development of personality—Inculcation of civic and social duties—Promotion of social efficiency and happiness—Preservation and spread of culture—Aims of other educational systems.

**The Importance of the Subject :** The study of the history and the main features of education in ancient India is a subject of great interest and importance to the student both of education as well as of civilisation. Educational institutions usually mirror the ideals of a nation and enable us to understand the spirit of its civilisation. This was more especially the case in ancient times when schools and colleges were the chief centres, wherein the rising generation could be imbued with the traditions of the race and induced to adopt them in its own life. We should not forget in this connection that paper and printing were unknown, and so the masses could be approached not with the help of the modern means of newspapers, magazines or cheap and popular books, but only through the influence that indirectly infiltrated to them from the limited number of students that used to receive education in schools and colleges.

**Advantages of long and continuous History :** Ancient Indian civilisation is one of the most interesting and important civilisations of the world; if we want to

understand it properly, we must study its system of education which preserved, propagated and modified it during the course of more than four thousand years. This circumstance lends an added importance and interest to the study of ancient Indian education. We can visualise here more clearly than we can do elsewhere the effects of changing ideals and circumstances on the features and fortunes of the educational system. We very often hear of such and such a thing being characteristic of ancient Indian system of education. The statement may however be only partially correct ; it may be true of one period of ancient Indian history and untrue of another. Thus, for instance, the statement that the caste determined the career and profession of an individual is substantially true of the Smṛiti period, but quite misleading about the Vedic age. The history of ancient Indian education will show, for instance, that at one time reason was regarded as superior to authority, but that society changed its attitude completely at a later age ; that at one time Hindu society favoured female education, but at a later date began to discourage it ; that at one time it attached great importance to manual skill and arts but at a later period began to hold them in contempt. How and why such changes took place in the educational system and ideals becomes quite clear to the student of ancient Indian education, as its history is spread over several millenniums.

**Sources :** Books exclusively devoted to the discussion of the various aspects, theories and ideals of education were hardly in existence even in the West before the 17th century A. D. It is no wonder that the same should have been the case in ancient India also. The student of the history of education, who desires to have a first-hand knowledge of the educational theories and practices of the ancient Indians, does not

have the facility of referring to a few standard books written on the subject. Dharmasūtras and Smṛitis no doubt devote some sections to the discussion of the main features of what may be conveniently described as secondary and college education ; but their treatment of the subject is more descriptive than critical. The fundamental conceptions, aims and principles of education have not been systematically discussed by them ; they have to be rather inferred from their stray observations. The most promising source of information for the topics of this and the next chapter is the mass of floating verses of unknown authorship, traditionally handed down from generation to generation in cultured circles, and reflecting their well considered views and opinions about the conception, aims and principles of education.

**Meaning of Education :** Before we proceed with the discussion of this topic, we have to point out that like some modern educationalists, ancient Indians also have used the term education in a wider as well as in a narrower sense. In its wider sense education is self-culture and self-improvement and the process will go on to the end of one's life. A thinker observes that the true teacher is a student to the end of his life.<sup>1</sup> No college or course can teach a doctor all that he has got to learn ; his practice will go on gradually widening the sphere of his knowledge. What is true of the doctor is also true of the teacher, the lawyer, the painter, the trader and the sculptor. When, however, we proceed to discuss the conception and aims of education, we use the term in its narrower sense as denoting the instruction and training which a youth receives during his studenthood before he

---

1. यावज्जीवमधीते विप्रः ।

settles down to his career or profession. We refer to those special influences which are designedly brought to bear on the members of the rising generation in the educational institutions before they enter the struggle for life.

**Education as Illumination :** From the Vedic age downwards the central conception of education of the Indians has been that it is a source of illumination giving us a correct lead in the various spheres of life., Knowledge, says one thinker, is the third eye of man, which gives him insight into all affairs and teaches him how to act.<sup>1</sup> Nothing gives us such an unfailing insight as education, says the *Mahābhārata*;<sup>2</sup> in the spiritual sphere, it leads to our salvation,<sup>3</sup> in the mundane sphere it leads to all-round progress and prosperity. The illumination given to us by education shatters illusions, removes difficulties and enables us to realise the true value of life. A person, who does not possess the light of education, may be really described as blind.<sup>4</sup> The correct insight, which men and women get from education, naturally increases their intelligence, power and efficiency ; ancient Indians have emphatically averred that intellect, as developed and refined by education, is the real power in this world.<sup>5</sup> The uses of education are too diverse to be exhaustively enumerated ; it nourishes us like the mother, directs us to the proper path like the father,

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1. ज्ञानं तृतीयं मनुजस्य नेत्रं समस्ततत्त्वार्थविलोकदक्षम् ।

तेजोऽनपेक्षं विगतान्तरायं प्रवृत्तिमत्सर्वजगत्त्रयेऽपि ॥

*Subhāshitaratnasandoha*, p. 194.

2. नास्ति विद्यासमं चक्षुर्नास्ति सत्यसमं तपः । XII. 339.6.

3. सा विद्या या विमुक्तये ।

4. अनेकसंशयोच्छेदि परोक्षार्थस्य दर्शकम् ।

सर्वस्य लोचनं शास्त्रं यस्य नास्त्यन्य एव सः । S.R.B., p.30v.2.

5. बुद्धिर्यस्य बलं तस्य ।

and gives us delight and comfort like the wife.<sup>1</sup> It increases our fame, destroys our difficulties and makes us purer and more cultured. When we are in the solitude of a journey, or of a foreign country, it serves us as a valued companion. It is thus a veritable desire-yielding tree.<sup>2</sup> It is at the root of all human happiness; it increases our efficiency, and enables us to get fame and wealth by securing us respect in public assemblies and royal courts. The wealth we thus get not only leads to our happiness, but also enables us to perform meritorious work of public utility and discharge religious duties of different types. This indirectly leads to our salvation.<sup>3</sup> Education thus promotes our material as well as spiritual welfare both in this as well as in after life.<sup>4</sup>

**Education as an Agency of Improvement :** The illumination, insight and guidance which education gives to us effects a complete transformation. "If one human being is superior to another," says a Vedic thinker, "it is not because he possesses an extra hand or eye, but because his mind and intellect are sharpened and rendered more efficient by education."<sup>5</sup> Devoid of education, says Bhartrihari, we are mere beasts;<sup>6</sup> education elevates us into human beings.

1. मातेव रक्षति पितेव हिते नियुक्ते कान्तेव चापि रमयत्यपनीय खेदम् ।  
लक्ष्मीं तनोति वितनोति च दिक्षुकीर्तिं किं किं न साधयति कल्पलतेव विद्या ॥  
*Ibid.*, p. 31 v. 14.
2. श्रियः प्रदुग्धे विपदं रुणद्धि यशांसि सूते मलिनं प्रमाष्टि ।  
संस्कारशौचेन नरं पुनीते शुद्धा हि बुद्धिः किल कल्पधेनुः ।  
*Ibid.*, p. 31, v. 12  
विद्या बन्धुजनो विदेशगमने । *Nitisataka* 16.
3. विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयाद्याति पात्रताम् ।  
पात्रत्वाद्धनमाप्नोति धनाद्धर्मं ततः सुखम् ॥
4. विद्या तु वैदुष्यमुपार्जयन्ति जायति लोकद्वयसाधनाय ॥
5. अक्षण्वन्तः कर्णवन्तः सखायो मनोजत्रेषु असमायभूवुः । *R.V.X* 717.
6. विद्याविहीनः पशुः । *Nitisataka* 16.

Life without education is, therefore, utterly futile and worthless.<sup>1</sup> The same idea is expressed by the theologian in his own language when he says that even a Brahmana continues to remain a Shudra till he receives proper education, refining his nature and making him cultured.<sup>2</sup> It will be thus seen that like Mulcaster in later time ancient Indians held that education helps nature to perfection.

**Diverse Functions of Education :** Education brings about this great transformation in a variety of ways. To begin with, it gives us proper notions of cleanliness and manners and thus makes us more acceptable to our fellow citizens. It is interesting to note that ancient Indians attached great importance to this topic and have laid down that the rules of cleanliness and etiquette should be first taught to the young student before anything else (*Manu*, II. 69). Education removes our prejudices and makes us more reasonable and considerate by enabling us to understand viewpoints different from our own.<sup>3</sup> It sharpens the intellect, improves the grasping power and develops the faculty of discrimination and thus protects us from falling into errors.<sup>4</sup> It strengthens our moral nature and enables us to stand the severest temptations of life. Some of the the greatest tragedies of life occur because we are unable to control ourselves. True education refines and strengthens our moral fibre

1. शुनः पुच्छमिव व्यर्थं जीवितं विद्यया विना ।  
न गुह्यगोपने शक्तं न च दंशनिवारणे । *R. R. B.* 31. 18.
2. जन्मना जायते शूद्रः संस्काराद् द्विज उच्यते ।  
विद्यया याति विप्रत्वं त्रिभिः श्रोत्रिय उच्यते ॥
3. अज्ञः सुखमाराध्यः सुखतरमाराध्यते विशेषतः । *Nitis* 2.
4. यस्य नास्ति विवेकस्तु केवलं यो बहुश्रुतः ।  
न स जानाति शास्त्रार्थान्दिवी पाकरसानिव ॥ *S. B. S.* 41. 18.

and thus prevents us from being affected by the wayward breezes of fleeting passions and prejudices. Montaigne has said, "If the mind be not better disposed by education, if the judgment be not better settled, I had much rather that my scholar had spent his time at tennis." Ancient Indians would certainly have fully concurred with this view.

**Education includes Physical Development :** A strong will however presupposes a strong body ; ancient Indians therefore wisely emphasised on the mind of the young student the importance of attending to the proper development of his body by pointing out that a strong physique is a *sine qua non* of success not only in mundane but also in religious matters.<sup>1</sup> The student was expected to be able to defend himself by being an expert in the use of the *lathi*, which he has always to carry about as a part of his uniform. Every morning he must perform *prāṇāyāma* and go through the exercise of *Sūrya-namaskāra* in order to strengthen his lungs and bring about an all-round development of his body.

**Education not merely Book Learning :** Since illumination is the central conception in education, it is needless to add that mere book learning was not regarded as synonymous with education. It has been pointed out that a man may have studied different branches of knowledge and yet remain uneducated, if he has not developed an insight and obtained an illumination as a result of his studies ; he is a really educated man, who shines as a man of action.<sup>2</sup> True education also solves the problem of the bread. It may not make

1. शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् । *Kumarasambhava*, V, 30.

2. शास्त्राण्यधीत्यापि भवन्ति मूर्खा यस्तु क्रियावान्पुरुषः स एव ।

सुचितितं चोषधमातुराणां न नाममात्रेण करोत्यरोगम् ॥

S. R. B. p. 40 v. 21



us wealthy, for wealth often depends upon luck. But it ought to enable us to get a decent living. Even a parrot is enabled to get its food, points out one thinker, by learning a few words ; why then should a man with true education fail to get his livelihood ?<sup>1</sup> Education was never to be regarded as a mere bread and butter proposition ; persons entertaining such a view were severely condemned in ancient India.<sup>2</sup> It was however realised that if a man does not live by the bread alone, he cannot live without it either. Education therefore, while giving us illumination, insight and culture, ought to enable us to live as respectable and self-supporting citizens. It should not only make us fit to live, but also fit us to get a living.

**Summary :** To sum up, education was regarded as a source of illumination and power, which transforms and ennobles our nature by the progressive and harmonious development of our physical, mental intellectual and spiritual powers and faculties.<sup>3</sup> It thus enables us to live as decent and useful citizens of society and indirectly helps us to make progress in the spiritual sphere, both in this life and in the life to come.

**Aims and Ideals of Education :** Let us now see what were the aims and ideals of education in ancient India. Infusion of spirit of a piety and religiousness, formation of character, development of personality,

( Continued from the last page )

पठकः पाठकश्चैव ये चान्ये शास्त्रपाठकाः ।

सर्वे व्यसनिनो ज्ञेया यः क्रियावान्स पंडितः । *Mbh.* III, 313, 110.

1. सद्विद्या यदि का चिन्ता वराकोदरपूरणे ।

शूकोऽप्यशनमान्नोति रामरामेति च ब्रुवन् ॥ *S. R. B.* p. 319.

2. यस्यागमः केवलजीविकायै तं ज्ञानपथं वरिणं वदन्ति । *Mala-vikagnimitra* 1, 17.

3. This conception closely resembles that of Pestolozzi.

inculcation of civic and social duties, promotion of social efficiency and preservation and spread of national culture may be described as the chief aims and ideals of ancient Indian education. Let us now see what were the views of our educationalist about each of them.

**Infusion of Piety and Religiousness :** Religion played a large part in life in ancient India and teachers were usually priests. It is therefore no wonder that infusion of a spirit of piety and religiousness in the mind of the rising generation should have been regarded as the first and foremost aim of education. The rituals which were performed at the beginning of both the literary and professional education,—primary as well as higher—the religious observances (*vratas*), which the student had to observe during the educational course, the daily prayers which he offered morning and evening, the religious festivals that were celebrated with eclat in the school or the preceptor's house almost every month,—all these tended to foster piety and religiousness in the mind of the young student. It was the spiritual background that was thus provided which was expected to help the student to withstand the temptations of life. The very atmosphere, in which he lived and breathed, impressed upon him the reality of the spiritual world and made him realise that though his body may be a product of nature, his mind, intellect and soul belonged to the world of spirit, the laws of which ought to govern his conduct, mould his character and determine the ideals of his life.

**Limitations on Religiousness :** Though the educational system thus provided the background of piety and religiousness, its aim was not to induce the student to renounce the world and become a wanderer in the quest of God like the Buddha or Tulsidas. Even in the case of Vedic students, who intended to

follow a religious career, only a microscopic minority used to remain life-long Brahmacharins, pursuing the spiritual quest ; the vast majority was expected to become and did become householders. The direct aim of all education, whether literary or professional, was to make the student fit to become a useful and pious member of society.

**Formation of Character :** The illumination and power which men and women received from education was primarily intended to transform and ennoble their nature. The formation of character by the proper development of the moral feeling was therefore the second aim of education. Like Locke, ancient Indian thinkers held that mere intellectual attainments were of less consequence than the development of proper moral feeling and character. The Vedas being held as revealed, educationalists naturally regarded their preservation as of utmost national importance ; yet they unhesitatingly declare that a person of good character with mere smattering of the Vedic knowledge is to be preferred to a scholar, who though well versed in the Vedas, is impure in his life, thoughts and habits.<sup>1</sup> Montaigne has observed, "Cry out, 'there is a learned man' and people will flock round him" ; cry out 'there is a good man', and people will not look at him." Indian thinkers were aware of this natural human tendency and wanted to counteract it by pointing out that character was more important than learning. One thinker goes to the extent of saying that he alone is learned who is righteous.<sup>2</sup> This opinion tallies remarkably with that of Socrates, who held that virtue is knowledge. Evil effects of

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1. सावित्रीमात्रसारोपि वरं विप्रः सुयन्त्रितः ।

नायन्त्रितस्त्रिवेदोपि सर्वाशी सर्वविक्रयी ॥ *Manu.* II. 118.

2. धर्मं हि यो वर्धयते स पण्डितः । *Mbh.* XII. 321. 78.

divorcing power from virtue, intellectual and scientific progress from moral and spiritual values, which are being so vividly illustrated in the modern age, were, well realised by ancient Indians ; they have, therefore insisted that while a man is being educated, his regard for morality ought to be developed, his feeling of goodwill towards human beings ought to be nourished and his control over his mind ought to be strengthened, so that he can follow the beacon light of his conscience.<sup>1</sup> In other words education ought to develop man's ideal nature by giving him a sure moral feeling and by enabling him to control his original animal nature. The tree of education ought to flower in wisdom as well as in virtue, in knowledge as well as in manners.

**How Character was to be formed :** Direct injunctions to develop a sense of moral rectitude were scattered over almost every page of the books intended for students ; they were also orally given to them by their teachers every now and then. Apart from them however, the very atmosphere in which students lived, was calculated to give a proper turn to their character. They were under the direct and personal supervision of their teacher, who was to watch not only over their intellectual progress but also over their moral behaviour. Ancient Indians held that good character cannot be divorced from good manners ; the teacher was to see that in their every day life students followed the rules of etiquette and good manners towards their seniors, equals and inferiors. These rules afforded an imperceptible but effective help in the formation of character. The rituals which students occasionally

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1. Compare the view of Herbert : The aim of education should be to instill such ideas as will develop both the understanding of the moral order and conscientious spirit in carrying it out. *Great Educationalists*, pp. 175-76.

performed and the prayers which they regularly offered every day were calculated to emphasise upon their mind the fact that the student-life was a consecrated one and that its ideals could be realised only by those who did not swerve from the strict and narrow path of duty. Examples of national heroes and heroines like Hariṣchandra, Bhīṣma, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Hanumān, Sītā, Sāvitrī and Draupadī which were prominently placed before students, also served to mould their character in a powerful manner. Character was thus built up partly by the influence of direct injunctions, partly by the effect of continued discipline and partly by the glorification of national heroes, held in the highest reverence by society.

**Personality not repressed :** There is a general impression that Hindu educationalists suppressed personality by prescribing a uniform course of education and enforcing it with an iron discipline. Such however was not the case. The caste system had not become hide-bound down to c. 500 B. C. and till that time a free choice of profession or career was possible both in theory and practice. Later on when the system became rigid, the theory no doubt was that everybody should follow his hereditary profession but the practice permitted considerable freedom to enterprising individuals, as will be shown in the following chapter. It is wrong to conclude from some stray passages that the whole of the Brahmana fraternity, if not the whole of the Aryan community, was compelled to devote twelve years to the task of memorising the Vedic text.<sup>1</sup> Kshatriyas and Vaishyas never took seriously to the Vedic learning : only a small number of the Brahmanas dedicated themselves to the Vedic studies, while the rest of the community learnt only a few Vedic hymns necessary for their

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1. E. G., *Manu*, III. I; II. 168.

daily use, and devoted their main energy to the study of the subjects of their own choice like logic, philosophy, literature, poetics or law. The educational curriculum of the Smṛitis represents the Utopian idealism of the Brahmana theologian and not the actual reality in society.

**Development of Personality :** The development of personality was in fact the third aim of the educational system. This was sought to be realised by eulogising the feeling of self-respect, by encouraging the sense of self-confidence, by inculcating the virtue of self-restraint and by fostering the powers of discrimination and judgment. The student was always to remember that he was the custodian and the torch-bearer of the culture of the race. Its welfare depended upon his proper discharge of his duties. If the warrior shines on the battle-field, or if the king is successful as an administrator, it is all due to their proper training and education ( *A. V. XI, 15, 17* ). To support the poor student was the sacred duty of society, the non-performance of which would lead to dire spiritual calamities. A well trained youth, who had finished his education, was to be honoured more than the king himself. It is but natural that such an atmosphere should develop the student's self-respect in a remarkable manner.

**Influence of Self-confidence :** Self-confidence was also fostered equally well. The Upanayana ritual, as we shall see in Appendix I. B, used to foster self-confidence by pointing out that divine powers would co-operate with the student and help him on to the achievement of his goal, if he on his part did his duty well. Poverty need not depress him ; he was the ideal student who would subsist by begging his daily food. If he was willing to work in his spare time he could demand and get free education from any

teacher of institution. Self-reliance is the mother of self-confidence, and the Hindu educational system sought to develop it in a variety of ways, as we shall see in the following pages. Uncertainty of the future prospect did not damp the student's self-confidence. If he was following a professional course, his career was already determined. There was no overcrowding or cut-throat competition in professions. If he was taking religious and liberal education, poverty was to be the ideal of his life. His needs ought to be, and as a matter of fact were, few, and the state and society supplied them well.

**Influence of Self-restraint :** The element of self-restraint, that was emphasised by the educational system, further served to enrich the student's personality. Self-restraint that was emphasised was distinctly different from self-repression. Simplicity in life and habits was all that was insisted upon. The student was to have a full meal, only it was to be a simple one. The student was to have sufficient clothing, only it was not to be foppish. The student was to have his recreation only, they were not to be frivolous. He was to lead a life of perfect chastity, but that was only to enable him to be an efficient and healthy householder when he married. It will be thus seen that what the educationalists aimed at did not result in self-repression, but only promoted self-restraint that was essential for the development of a proper personality. Nor was this self-restraint enforced by Spartan ways of correction and punishment. The teacher was required to use persuasion and spare the rod as far as possible. He was liable to be prosecuted if he used undue force. Self-discipline was developed mainly by the formation of proper habits during the educational course.

**Discrimination and Judgment developed :** It may be further pointed out that the powers of discrimination and judgment, so necessary for the development of proper personality, were well developed in students taking liberal education and specialising in logic, law philosophy, poetics or literature. These branches of study bristled with controversies and the student had to understand both the sides, form his own judgment and defend his position in literary debates. It was only with the Vedic students that education became mechanical training of memory. This became inevitable in later times when the literature to be preserved became very extensive and the modern means for its preservation in the form of paper and printing were unavailable. In earlier days even Vedic students were trained in interpreting the hymns they used to commit to memory.

**Stress on Social Duties :—**The inculcation of civic and social duties, which was the fourth aim of the educational system, was particularly emphasised. The graduate was not to lead a self-centred life. He must teach his lore to the rising generation even when there was no prospect of a fee. He was enjoined perpetuation of race and culture by raising and educating progeny. He was to perform his duties as a son, a husband, and a father conscientiously and efficiently. His wealth was not to be utilised solely for his own or his family's wants; he must be hospitable and charitable. Particularly emphatic are the words in the convocation address, emphasising these duties.<sup>1</sup> Professions had their own codes of honour which laid stress on the civic responsibilities of their members. The physician was required to relieve disease and distress even at the cost of his life, The warrior had

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1. *Tai. Up.*, I, II; see Appendix III.



his own high code of honour, and could attack his opponent only when the latter was ready. Social structure in ancient India was to a great extent independent of government. Governments rose and fell, but social and village life and national culture were not much affected by these changes. It was probably this circumstance that was responsible for the non-inclusion of patriotism among the civic duties, inculcated by the Educational System.

### **Promotion of Social Efficiency and Happiness :**

The promotion of social efficiency and happiness was the fifth aim of the educational system. It was sought to be realised by the proper training of the rising generation in the different branches of knowledge, professions and industries. Education was not imparted merely for the sake of culture or for the purpose of developing mental and intellectual powers and faculties. Indirectly though effectively, it no doubt promoted these aims, but primarily it was imparted for the purpose of training every individual in the calling which he was expected to follow. Society had accepted the theory of division of work, which was mainly governed in later times by the principle of heredity. Exceptional talent could always select the profession it liked; Brahmanas and Vaishyas as kings and fighters, Kshatriyas and even Shudras as philosophers and religious teachers, make their appearance throughout the Indian history. It was however deemed to be in the interest of the average man that he should follow his family's calling. The educational system sought to qualify the members of the rising generation for their more or less pre-determined spheres of life. Each trade, guild and family trained its children in its own profession. This system might have sacrificed the individual inclinations of a few, but it was undoubtedly in the interest of many. Differentiation of

functions and their specialisation in hereditary families naturally heightened the efficiency of trades and professions, and thus contributed to social efficiency. By thus promoting the progress of the different branches of knowledge, arts and professions, and by emphasising civic duties and responsibilities on the mind of the rising generation, the educational system contributed materially to the general progress and happiness of society.

**Preservation and Spread of Culture :** The preservation and spread of national heritage and culture was the sixth and one of the most important aims of the Ancient Indian System of Education. It is well recognised that education is the chief means of social and cultural continuity and that it will fail in its purpose if it did not teach the rising generation to accept and maintain the best traditions of thought and action and transmit the heritage of the past to the future generations. Any one who takes even a cursory view of ancient writings on the subject is impressed by the deep concern that was felt for the preservation and transmission of the entire literary, cultural and professional heritage of the race. Members of the profession were to train their children in their own lines, rendering available to the rising generation at the outset of its career all the skill and processes that were acquired after painful efforts of the bygone generations. The services of the whole Aryan community were conscripted for the purpose of the preservation of the Vedic literature. Every Aryan had to learn at least a portion of his sacred literary heritage. It was an incumbent duty on the priestly class to commit the whole of the Vedic literature to memory in order to ensure its transmission to unborn generations. It is true that not all the Brahmanas followed this injunction, but that was because

they had the commonsense to realise that the services of their entire class were not necessary for the task. A section of the Brahmana community, however, was always available to sacrifice its life and talents in order to ensure the preservation of the sacred texts. Theirs was a life-long and almost a tragic devotion to the cause of learning. For, they consented to spend their life in committing to memory what others and not they could interpret. Secular benefits that they could expect were few and not at all commensurate with the labour involved. Remaining sections of the Brahmana community were fostering the studies of the different branches of liberal education like grammar, literature, poetics, law, philosophy and logic. They were not only preserving the knowledge of the ancients in these branches, but constantly increasing its boundaries by their own contributions which were being made down to the medieval times. Specialisation became a natural consequence of this tendency and it tended to make education deep rather than broad.

**The Theory of Three Debts :** The interesting theory of three debts, which has been propounded since the Vedic age, has effectively served the purpose of inducing the rising generation to accept and maintain the best traditions of thought and action of the past generations. The theory maintains that the moment an individual is born in this world, he incurs three debts, which he can discharge only by performing certain duties. First of all, he owes a debt to gods, and he can liquidate it only by learning how to perform proper sacrifices and by regularly offering them. Religious traditions of the race were thus preserved. Secondly, he owes a debt to *rishis* or *savants* of the bygone ages and can discharge it only by studying their works and continuing their literary and professional traditions. The rising generation was thus

enabled to master maintain the best literary and professional traditions. The third debt was the debt to ancestors, which can be repaid only by raising progeny and by imparting proper education to it.<sup>1</sup> Steps were thus taken to see that the rising generation became an efficient torch-bearer of the culture and traditions of the past.

#### Other Methods to preserve Cultural Tradition :

The emphasis laid on obedience to parents, respect to elders and gratitude to the *savants* of the bygone ages also helped to preserve the traditions of the past. Especially significant in this connection are the rules about *svādhyāya* and *rishitarpaṇa*; the former enjoin a daily recapitulation of at least a portion of what was learn during the student life and the latter require a daily tribute of gratitude to be paid to the literary giants of the past at the time of the daily prayers. In later times, when archaic Sanskrit ceased to be understood and abstract and abstruse philosophy failed to appeal to masses, a new type of literature, the Puraṇas, was composed to popularise national culture and traditions among the masses. It was daily expounded to the masses in vernaculars, and as a consequence the best cultural tradition of the past filtered down to and were preserved by even illiterate population. Devotional literature in vernacular also served the same function.

**Conclusion :** Body, mind, intellect and spirit constitute a human being; the aims and ideals of ancient Indian education were to promote their simultaneous and harmonious development. Men are social beings; ancient Indian education not only emphasised social

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1 जायमानो वै ब्राह्मणस्तृभिर्ऋतौऋणवाञ्छायते ।

यज्ञेन देवेभ्यो ब्रह्मचर्येण ऋषिभ्यः प्रजया पितृभ्यः ।

T. S., see also S. Lr., 1. 5. 5.

duties but also promoted social happiness. No nation can be called educated which cannot preserve and expand its cultural heritage. Our education enabled us to do this for several centuries.

**Aims of Education : Some Comparative Observations :** It would be interesting to compare the aims and ideals of ancient Indian education with those of some other systems, both ancient and modern, both eastern and western. We therefore now proceed to do so. In ANCIENT CHINA, Confucius preached that the purpose of education should be to train each individual in his path of duty, wherein is to be prescribed most minutely every detail of life's occupations and relationships. If we understand duty in a sufficiently wide sense, this definition of the aim of education would appear to be very similar to that of ancient Indian educationalists. In ANCIENT GREECE as well as in REFORMATION EUROPE, the ideal of personal culture loomed large in the educational system. Ancient Indians held that the individual exists more for society than *vice versa*; it was therefore the function of education to acquaint the individual with the culture of the race. Personal culture was promoted by the educational system only to the extent it was possible to do so by imparting national culture. Music, painting and fine arts thus did not become subjects of general education in ancient India as they became in ancient Greece. THE SPARTAN EDUCATION aimed at providing the state with as many faithful and capable soldiers as possible, who would defend it with the armed hand. The existence of the Aryans in India was not a precarious one; they were not like the Spartans threatened by a slave population about ten times their own number; so their education was not naturally dominated by the military ideal to any extent. MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN EDUCATIONALISTS

held that education should be primarily for piety and wisdom ; some writers like Montaigne also have advocated that it should develop virtue, wisdom, good manners and learning. Ancient Indians agreed with this view but added that education must also fit an individual for a useful profession. JESUITICAL EDUCATION aimed at creating an army of faithful and resolute servants of the Catholic Church. Brahmana priests, who controlled and guided education in ancient India, did not have so narrow an aim ; the youths they trained very often questioned their traditional beliefs and started new theories of religion and philosophy. The system also provided for the needs of the laity. MILTON held that educational system should qualify a youth to perform skilfully, justly and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war. Ancient Indians held that all persons are not versatile enough to be trained for this ideal ; they believed in the differentiation of functions and trained different classes for their different duties. SOME MODERN AMERICAN EDUCATIONALISTS hold that moral character and social efficiency, and not mere erudition and culture, should be the aims of education. Ancient Indians accepted this view ; but they added that the preservation of the ancient national culture, which naturally does not loom large before a young nation like America, must also figure prominently as an aim of education. SOVIET EDUCATION concentrates its activities on the training and upliftment of the proletariat. There was no class war in ancient India ; educationalists therefore tried to provide education to each class, suitable for its own needs and traditions. MODERN INDIAN EDUCATION is dominated by the aim of passing examinations with high honours ; this aim was practically non-existent in ancient India. It will be shown in Chapter VI how examinations played quite a negligible part in ancient Indian education.

## CHAPTER II

### SOME EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND POSTULATES.

Education for all—Education a serious proposition and marriage incompatible with it—Education to begin in childhood and not to stop with graduation—Student's cooperation important—Rod to be used very sparingly—Importance of habits, routine, association and imitation—The Gurukula system—The role and importance of the family—Various theories about Nature vs. Nurture—Influence of the caste system—The system once flexible, Brahmanas and non-Brahmanas teaching each others' subjects—Its influence on the curriculum of Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas and Shudras in later times—Caste system and Buddhism.

**Introduction :** It is desirable to discuss now important educational principles and postulates accepted and assumed by ancient Indian thinkers. This would facilitate the proper understanding of the evolution and history of the different aspects of education that would be described later on in the book. It has to be observed at the outset that principles and postulates have not been systematically and comprehensively discussed in any ancient work ; they have to be gathered from diverse and scattered sources and inferred from educational practice.

**Education should be thorough :** We have seen already how education was regarded as a source of illumination and was expected to enable its recipients to meet successfully the difficulties and problems of life. It was therefore insisted that it should be thorough and efficient. The educational system did not aim at imparting a general knowledge of a number of subjects ; its ideal was to train experts in different branches. Printing and paper being unknown, books were very costly and libraries practically non-existent ; the educa-

tional system therefore took particular care to train and develop memory in order to ensure that students had learnt during their college days should stand them in good stead throughout their life. Personal attention to each student was insisted upon to ensure a high degree of proficiency. In professional education the necessity of practical training was emphasised for the same reason.

**Education for all :** Since education was regarded as the best agency for improving society it was naturally insisted that it should be available to all those who were qualified to receive it. It was not regarded, as was the case in Ancient Greece, as the privilege of those lucky few who had the necessary leisure for its acquisition. To ensure literary education to the largest possible number, Upanayana ritual, which marked the beginning of religious and literary education, was made obligatory for all the Aryans, both males and females. It was further declared that a man can discharge his debt to ancestors not merely by procreating sons but by providing for their proper education.<sup>1</sup> Every Aryan, i. e., every Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya, thus received at least the rudiments of literary and religious education. Things however changed for the worse during the first millennium of the Christian era, when Kshatriyas and Vaishyas gradually ceased to perform Upanayana and sank to the level of the Shudras. This gave a great set back to their literary education. As far as the professional education was concerned, it was ensured to almost all persons anxious to receive it, when the caste system became hereditary ; every family was expected to train its children and bring them up in the traditions of its profession.



**Steps taken to realise the Ideal :** Society also took several other important steps to realise this ideal. To ensure an adequate supply of teachers, it enjoined that teaching was a holy duty which a Brahmana was bound to discharge irrespective of the consideration as to whether any fee was likely to be received or not. It made education free and held to public opprobrium any teacher who would stipulate for fees. In order to bring education within the reach of the poorest, it not only permitted students to beg, but elevated begging itself into the highest duty of the student life. In order to ensure a reasonable maintenance to teachers, who were expected to devote their lives to the cause of teaching in the missionary spirit of self-sacrifice, society laid down that both the public and the state should help learned teachers and educational institutions very liberally. How these arrangements worked in practice will be explained in Chapter IV.

**Education a serious Undertaking :** Though ancient Indians held that all should normally receive the benefits of education, they have also laid down that persons who were morally and intellectually unfit to receive it should be excluded from its benefit (*Nirukta*, II, 4) ; this was a necessary precaution to avoid waste. They further point out that real scholarship cannot be obtained by dilettantish or perfunctory studies ; impatience is as great an enemy of learning as self-complacency.<sup>1</sup> The rich and the poor have both to submit to stern discipline in order to become learned. Long, continued and laborious preparation is necessary to acquire real grounding and efficiency in a subject. One who is lazy or anxious to dabble in several matters, or one who wants to have a merry time during his school

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1 अशुश्रूषा त्वरा श्लाघा विद्यायाः शत्रवस्त्रयः । *Mbh*, V. 40. 4.

and college days, cannot become a good scholar<sup>1</sup>.

**Marriage incompatible with Studentship :** Naturally therefore ancient Indians held that a student ought not to marry during his educational course. The term *Brahmachāri*, which is used to denote a student, primarily refers to a person leading a celibate life in order to realise his educational ideals and ambitions. Our authorities insist that the student should observe celibacy both in thought and deed. He can marry only at the end of his course, when permitted by his preceptor to do so.

**Lapse from this ideal :** Owing to several causes, which cannot be discussed here, the marriageable age of girls began to fall down gradually from c. 600 B.C. From 16 it came down to 14, then to 12 and then to 11 or 10. The last mentioned limit was reached during the early centuries of the Christian era. The lowering of the marriageable age of girls naturally brought down the marriageable age of boys to about 16 or 18; marriage thus became inevitable before the end of education. As early as the 3rd century B. C. we find occasional references to the cases of husbands staying away from their wives for some years during their educational course;<sup>2</sup> these cases later became common. We may safely conclude that from about the beginning of the Christian era, more than 50 percent students used to marry before their education was completed.

- 1 सुखार्थिनः कुतो विद्या नास्ति विद्यार्थिनः सुखम् ॥  
 नान्योद्योगवता न चाप्रवसता नात्मानमुत्कर्षता ।  
 नालस्योपहृतेन नामयवता नाचार्यविद्वेषिणा ॥  
 लज्जाशीलविनम्रसुन्दरमुखीं सीमन्तिनीं नेच्छता ।  
 लोके ख्यातिकरः सतामभिमतो विद्यागुणः प्राप्यते ॥ Subhāshitas.

- 2 ब्राह्मणमधीयानं दशवर्षाणि (प्रतीक्षेत) । A. S. III. 4.

**Education to begin at proper Time :** Ancient Indians were convinced that no good results would follow if education is begun late in life. A boy who begins his education at 16 is not likely to bring any credit to himself, or to his teachers.<sup>1</sup> During our childhood, mind, is pliable, memory keen and intellect receptive; it is only at this period of life, that it is possible to form good habits which may be of life-long use to us. Ancient Indians have therefore insisted that education ought to commence in childhood. One thinker observes that parents themselves would become the greatest enemies of a child, whose education has been neglected during the childhood.<sup>2</sup> It was held that the 5th year and the 8th year would be the proper time for the beginning of the primary and the secondary education respectively. Our educationalists had however recognised that it would be necessary to vary these years in accordance with the cultural traditions of the family.<sup>3</sup>

**Studies not to stop with the Course :** Even in modern times, when books are cheap and library facilities fairly good, students forget a good deal of what they learn within a few years after leaving the school or the college. The danger was much greater in ancient times when books were rare, costly and fragile. Our educationalists therefore emphasise that every graduate should daily recapitulate a portion of what he had learnt in the school or the college. At the time of his convocation, the chancellor particularly exhorted him not to neglect his duty of daily revision.<sup>4</sup>

1 नातिषोडशवर्षमुपनयीत प्रसृष्टवृषणो ह्येष वृषलीभूतो भवति ॥

J. Gr. S., I: 12.

2 माता शत्रुः पिता वैरी बालो येन न पाठितः । Subhashita.

3 See Appendix I, sections A and B.

4 स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् । J. U., 11.

To forget what had once been learnt was pronounced to be a sin as grave as the murder of a friend or Brahmana (*Yaj.*, III. 228). During the rainy season, every graduate was expected to devote extra time to his studies 'in order to remove their staleness'. Some thinkers like Śvetaketu even recommended an annual stay of two months at the college for this purpose (*A. D. S.*, X 1. 2. 12). Others held that a temporary stay at Gurukula was imperative only<sup>1</sup> if what had been learnt earlier was forgotten later.

**Importance of Student's Cooperation :** Ancient Indians held that education was not a passive or one sided process and that it will be productive of good and great results only when full and voluntary cooperation is coming forth from students. They must feel the urge to acquire more knowledge ; then there would be pleasure in teaching them. If there is no real desire for learning and improvement, it would be useless to waste time and labour over the education of insincere students (Manu, II, 113-4, 191). But what was to be done if a student entrusted to the charge and care of a teacher begins to show a continuous indifference to duty ? How was he to be induced to do his work ? Was the teacher merely to remonstrate, or was he to inflict physical punishment ?

**Views about physical punishment :** As may be expected, there was no unanimity of views among ancient Indian educationalists about the advisability of physical punishment. Āpastamba recommends that a teacher should try to improve refractory students by banishing them from his presence or by imposing a fast (1.2.8.30). He seems to be opposed to physical chastisement. Manu grows eloquent over

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1 यन्मा विद्यया न विरोचेत् पुनराचार्यमुपेत्य नियमेन साधयेत् ।

the virtues of gentle persuasion ( II. 159-61 ), but eventually permits the imposition of mild physical punishment by a thin rod or rope. Gautama agrees with him, but adds that a teacher giving a more severe punishment would be liable for legal prosecution.<sup>1</sup> Vishnu regarded occasional physical punishment as indispensable. A teacher in Taxila, when giving physical punishment to a royal student from Banaras, who would not give up his stealing habits in spite of repeated exhortation, exclaims that the use of the rod cannot be altogether given up by a teacher. He takes up the position of Manu and Gautama, which represents the *via media*, and seems to have been generally followed in ancient India. The Taxila teacher seems to have held views similar to those of Locke, who permits corporal punishment for moral remissness.

**Corporal punishment elsewhere<sup>2</sup> :** In ancient times corporal punishment was the order of the day. It was given in Sparta not only as a corrective, but also as a means of making students hardier. In the schools of this city, there were rather whipping exercises than the imposition of corporal punishment. Other schools in ancient times did not go to the extreme length of Sparta, but permitted a liberal use of the rod. The same was the case with the Europe of the Middle Ages and it was but natural. At a time when man was regarded as a vessel of sin, and when he hoped

1 शिष्यशिष्टिरवधेन । अशक्तौ रज्जुवेणुविदलाभ्याम् । अन्येन घ्नन्  
राज्ञा शास्यः । 1. 2. 48. 53.

2 अरिया अनारियं कुब्बानं यो दंडेन निसेधति ।

सासनत्थं न तं वेरं इति नं पंडिता विदुः । *Tilamuttat* J. Ne. 52

In Medieval India however, as in Medieval Europe, corporal punishment was liberally administered in village schools. The old ideals were forgotten by this time.

to become fit for heaven only through a bitter struggle with the flesh, extreme views about the place of punishment naturally prevailed among educationalists. The reaction started only with Rousseau.

**Importance of Habits :** One of the best way to secure ready cooperation from students was to encourage proper habits ; great importance was therefore attached to the formation of proper habits by the student during his education course. It was realised that habits constituted a second nature and those formed during the pliable and impressionable period of childhood would stand a person in good stead throughout his life. Rules of discipline, that are prescribed for the student, have been laid down not so much for the purpose of prohibiting him from doing undesirable acts as with the object of forming good and valuable habits. The habit of rising early was found to be good ; it was therefore laid down that the student must daily get up at the dawn. Plain living and high thinking was recognised to be a desideratum ; in order to develop a liking for it the use of costly food and gorgeous dress was prohibited. Life is a hard and long struggle against circumstances ; in order to prepare students for it, rules were laid down calculated to develop them into strong and hardy men with determined will and great enduring power.

**Importance of Routine :** It was recognised that routine also will play a great part in the formation of habits. The daily routine was carefully determined with a view to enable students to form good habits and master their subjects at the end of their course. Students of poetics and literature were constantly engaged in practising composition and versification. Students of theology had to take part daily in the performance of sacrifices, which they would be called upon to conduct in their after life. Apprentices in

sculpture and painting had to go through a long course of routine practice before they could finish their course. Students in primary and secondary schools went through the daily routine of recitation and recapitulation, which enabled them to master their subjects. The routine was made interesting by making several children take part in the recitation simultaneously.

**Association and Imitation :** Ancient Indians had realised that association and imitation play a great part in moulding the character and improving the calibre of a student. Even a dull student, they point out, will improve his intellect if he is in close association with a brilliant scholar and imitates his methods of study<sup>1</sup>. One should therefore be very careful in choosing one's company. One can now understand why our educationalists have attached a great importance to sending a student to live under the direct care of a teacher, or better still in a *gurukula* (boarding) of established reputation.

**The Gurukula System :** The Gurukula system, which necessitated the stay of the student away from his home at the house of a teacher or in a boarding house of established reputation, was one of the most important features of ancient Indian education. Smritis recommend that the student should begin to live under the supervision of his teacher after his Upanayana; etymologically *antevāsin*<sup>2</sup>, the word for the student,

1 बुद्धिश्च हीयते पुंसां नीचैः सह समागमात् ।

मध्यमैर्मध्यतां याति श्रेष्ठतां याति चोत्तमैः ॥ Mbh., VI. 1 30.

2 अन्तेवासी is an abbreviation of आचार्यकुलवासी Ch. Up.

uses this expression in the case of the general student' cf.

द्वितीयो ब्रह्मचारी आचार्यकुलवासी । II, 23.

denotes one who stays near his teacher and *samāvar-tana*, the word for convocation, means the occasion of returning home from the boarding or the teacher's house. The rules which require the student to rise earlier and sleep later than his teacher, to show him alms gathered at midday and to attend to the night service of his Agnihotra (sacrificial fire) also show that the student was normally living at the house of his teacher.<sup>1</sup> Ancient literature contains several stories like those of Nābhūnedishta and Kṛishṇa showing that students were being actually sent to reside with their preceptors. Of course this was recommended only in the case of students of higher education. The evidence of the Jātakas shows that they used to leave their homes, not perhaps immediately after their Upa-nayana, but at about the age of 14 or 15, when they were old enough to look after themselves in a distant place. It is also likely that parents living in the same locality with the teacher, or belonging to the same place where the educational institute was located, may not have always sent their wards to stay with their preceptors or in boarding houses. But such cases could not have been many. On the other hand there is evidence to show that rich persons used to deliberately send their children to distant places, even

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1 Stories like those of Upakosala, where we find the wife of the teacher coming forward to induce the student to give up his fast, also show incidentally that students must be living with their teachers; see *Ch. Up.* IV. 10. 3.

It is interesting to note that the Law of Limitation was relaxed in favour of students staying away from their homes at Gurukulas, ci.

ब्रह्मचारी चरेत्कश्चिद् व्रतं षट्त्रिंशदाब्दिकम् ।

समावृत्तो व्रती कुर्यात्स्वधनान्वेषणं ततः ॥

पञ्चाशदाब्दिको भोगस्तद्धनस्यापहारकः ॥ *Katyayana in Pa.*

*M.*, Vol. III, i, o. 148.



when there were famous teachers in their own towns, because they were anxious that they should reap the benefits of the Gurukula system.

**Gurukula System why recommended :** The recognition of the importance of association and imitation was one of the main reasons for the great emphasis laid on the Gurukula system. Direct and continuous contact with a teacher of noble character and great achievements naturally produces great effect on the scholar during the pliable period of childhood and adolescence. The close association with elderly scholars who had made progress in education and won the applause of their teachers, naturally induces the new entrants to emulate their example. The invisible yet all-pervading influence of established traditions of the institution naturally spurs the student to identify himself with them. The system eliminated the factors in home life prejudicial to the educational atmosphere and facilitated better studies; it however did not altogether eliminate the refining influence of the family life, because students used to come into indirect contact with it when living under the guardianship of their teachers, who were usually householders. It also served to tone down personal angularities of pampered children and made all students more resourceful and self-reliant and better acquainted with the ways of the world.<sup>1</sup> It was felt that students trained at home would lack the benefit of school discipline and suffer from desultoriness and want of application and

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1. Cf. पुराणिकराज्ञानो अत्तने पुत्ते 'एवं एते निहतमानदम्पा सीत-  
पृहक्खमा लोकचरितञ्जु भविस्संति' अत्तनो नगरे दीसापामोक्खे  
आचरिये विज्जमानेपि सिष्णुगहणत्थाय द्वे तिरोरट्ठं पेसंति ।

would thus normally compare very unfavourably with those trained in a Gurukula.<sup>1</sup>

**Gurukulas not always in Forests :** The general belief that Gurukulas were located in forests away from the din of the city life is but partly correct.<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that the majority of the teachers of philosophy in ancient India lived, thought out and taught their spiritual theories in sylvan solitudes. The same was the case with celebrated teachers like Vālmīki, Kaṇva and Sāṇḍipani, who used to stay in forests, though they had made arrangements in their Aśramas (forest retreats) to teach hundreds of students in subjects like philology, grammar, astronomy and civics, in addition to Veda, religion and philosophy ( *Mbh.*, I. 91 ). In the Jātakas ( *e. g.* No. 438 ) we sometimes come across the stories of teachers leaving cities like Banaras and retreating to Himalayan forests with a view to be free from the disturbances from the city life. They were confident that the villagers around would supply their few and simple wants. But in the majority of cases Gurukulas were located in villages or towns. It will be seen that such was the case with most of the educational centres that would be described in Chapter V. This was but natural, for teachers were usually householders. Care however was taken to locate Gurukula in a secluded place or garden,<sup>3</sup> and in holy

1 अपि च ज्ञानसंपन्नः सर्वान्वेदान्पितुर्गृहे ।

श्लाघमान इवाधीयाद् ग्राम्य इत्येव तं विदुः ॥ *Mbh.*, XIII 36. 15

2 Rules prescribing a holiday when there was a death or robbers raid in the village ( *Manu.* IV. 108, 183 ) presuppose that the school was not situated in a forest.

3 At Banaras during the 17th century, students and teachers used to select adjoining gardens and orchards for the purpose of study. This practice is presupposed by the *Go. Br.*, 1. 2. 1-8.

surroundings. The case of Buddhist Universities like Nalanda or Vikramasila and of Hindu *agrahāra*<sup>1</sup> settlements was peculiar; they were like modern University towns of Oxford, Cambridge or Benares Hindu University, independent educational settlements, where arrangements were made for the lodging and boarding of students who flocked in hundreds and thousands. They combined the advantages both of the town and forest life.

**Gurukulas in Medieval Europe :** A somewhat remote parallel to the Gurukula system can be detected in the custom of the 6th century Europe under which bishops who were not married, used to receive young students to live in their families, whom they used to nourish as good fathers in order to prepare worthy successors. On coming of age the children were however given the option to marry.<sup>2</sup> The motive in Europe was however predominantly monastic,—to prepare best persons for admission to the Holy Orders. Such was not the case in the Gurukulas of the Hindus, where the students were exhorted at the end of their course to marry. The heads of the Hindu Gurukulas were usually married householders, and not unmarried monks or Bhikshus. The medieval European system had a close parallel in the monastic educational institutions of the Buddhists, where the teachers were unmarried Bhikshus or monks and the students were admitted primarily with a view to their taking the Holy Orders.

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( Continued from last page )

where it states that students should enter the village only for necessary work like begging alms, etc.

1 This word denotes village consisting only of Brahmana scholars, who were assigned its entire revenues for the purpose of their maintenance. It may therefore be compared to a settlement of teachers, each of them being engaged in teaching some students free of charge.

2 Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. V., p. 769.

### **The Importance of the Family, pre-birth Period :**

Association and imitation begin to influence the student not only from the time of his joining a school or Gurukula but from his early childhood ; ancient Indians therefore attached great importance to the family in their scheme of education. They held that the child begins to receive influences that mould its character and determine its efficiency right from the time of its conception. If Prāhlada became a deep devotee and Abhimanyu a skilful warrior, the reason was the influence indirectly exercised upon them by Nārada and Kṛishṇa respectively, when they were still to be in this world. It was believed that the impressions, which would be conveyed on the mind of the expectant mother, would be automatically transmitted to the mind of the child to be born. The mother therefore was advised to devote herself to the study and contemplation of the achievement and biographies of great national heroes and heroines, so that she may herself get a child that may be a worthy successor of theirs.

**Family and the pre-School Period :** We have seen already that the preservation of the national culture was one of the important aims of education and the family was expected to co-operate with the school in its realisation. The ambition of the child was first fired and its imagination set aglow not by the lessons it received in the school but by the stories it heard from its mother and grandmother. Well known is the part which the home influence played in shaping the career and firing the imagination of heroes and saints like Rama and Prahlād, Rana Pratap and Tulsidāsa, Shivaji and Ramadāsa. Multiplication tables, noun declensions and some metrical rules about grammar were taught at home to the child during its early childhood in all cultured families. The home thus not only prepared the child for the school, but also supplemented its work.

### **The Role of the family in the pre-historic times :**

In pre-historic times, i. e., before about 1000 B. C., the family played a still greater part in the educational system. At that early period the professional teacher was yet rather rare ; so generally the father was the usual teacher and the home the usual school. Several examples are preserved in Vedic and Upanishadic literature of father themselves teaching their own sons.<sup>1</sup> Nay, the father himself was to begin the Vedic education, because it was he and he alone who was regarded as eligible for teaching the *Gāyatrī* Mantra to the boy ; recourse was had to another teacher only if he was unavailable for the purpose. In course of time, owing to greater specialisation that became inevitable, home education became possible only in the case of a few cultured families. Remaining families were however expected to take prompt steps to send the children to a teacher or a school at the proper time and supervise their lessons at home if necessary. Supervision of the education of the family wards was one of the most important duties of its head.

**Family and the Female Education :** In the case of the education of girls, the family played an important part. We do come across rare cases of girls being educated at boarding schools or colleges ; for instance, we read in the drama *Mālatīmādhava* how *Kāmandakī* was educated at a college along with *Bhūrivāsu* and *Deverāta* (Act I). These cases were however exceptional, for there was a general prejudice against sending girls outside for their education. Dharma-sutras insist that they should be taught at home by their male guardians like the father, the brother or the uncle. This was of course possible

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1. Prajāpati was the teacher of his sons, Devas, Asuras and Men  
Br. Up. V. 2. 1. Āruni had initiated his son Śvetakēta in the  
study of philosophy. Br. Up. , VI, 2. 1 ; Ch. Up. V 3.

only in well-to-do and cultured families. Home, of course, was the main centre of the education of girls in the domestic science.

**Nature vs. Nurture ; some western views :** What is the relative importance of nature and nurture in the scheme of education has been a question of great controversy since early times. Are human beings born with their mental, moral and intellectual characters and faculties rigidly predetermined, or can these be modified by education, and if so, to what extent ? As is well known, different answers are given to this question by different educationalists in the West also. Plato, for instance, held that human mind is like a skein, that has to be only unravelled in this world; all knowledge is contained in a man, he has only to be reminded of it. Darwin, Galton and Ribot attach great importance to the role which heredity plays in our nature and Shopenhauer held that human character is inborn and unalterable. Herbert and Locke on the other hand maintain that it is not nature but nurture that determine our destiny. We come into this world with minds as empty as our bodies are naked ; it is the training which we receive and the environments in which we live that determine our character and capacities.

**Vedic Age believed more in Nurture :** As may be expected, there is no unanimity of views among ancient Indian thinkers also about the relative importance of nature and nurture. A young people, fortunate to have a series of successes, naturally feel that there is nothing impossible or difficult for man. Vedic Aryans belonged to this category and their age therefore did not much believe in heredity or natural endowments. This is emphatically expressed in one of the hymns of the *Atharvaveda* where we are told that given proper education, everything can be accomplished. Even

Indra owes his supremacy among the gods not to any previous merit, but to his proper training during his studenthood.<sup>1</sup> A few centuries later we find a patriarch praying that some of his sons should become good priests, others brave warriors and the rest successful merchants ( S. Br., X. 4. 1. 10 ). Obviously he did not much believe in heredity and held that a good deal depend upon proper training and education.

**Karman Theory ; Growing Faith in Nature :** In the course of time, however, the supreme confidence that was placed in nurture began to weaken to a great extent. When the Aryans settled down in a less spectacular and more peaceful life and began to investigate more carefully the phenomena of life around them they began to feel that man is not entirely an architect of his own fortune, and that the powers and capacities with which he is born determine the scope of his prospects and activity to a considerable extent. The doctrines of *karman* and Rebirth, which were unknown in the Vedic age, became universally accepted in the course of time, swinging the pendulum considerably in favour of nature as against nurture. It began to be averred that the deeds ( *Karman* ) in previous lives, rather than the training in the present one, will determine whether our intellect is to be bright<sup>2</sup> and moral propensities strong. The development of the caste system on hereditary lines did not strengthen the hands of the advocates of nurture ; it began to be argued that the efficiency of a person as a priest or a warrior does not so much depend upon the training he receives in this life as upon the inherent qualities with which he is born as a consequence of his *Karman*.

1 इन्द्रो ह ब्रह्मचर्येण देवेभ्यः स्वराभवत् । v. 1. 10.

2 बुद्धिः कर्मानुसारिणी ।

in previous births. The *Karman* determines the qualities and characteristics, and God assigns birth in that particular caste in which they would be most needed. As a natural consequence of these theories, educationists began to aver that nature is more important than nurture; a bamboo tree cannot blossom into a sandal one simply because it is assiduously watered and manured and planted upon the Malaya mountain.<sup>1</sup> If you have no natural capacity, education cannot create it; a mirror can show reflection only to one who has the eyesight.<sup>2</sup> A conscientious teacher imparts education as assiduously to a brilliant as to a dull student; there is however a world of difference as to the results. One shines forth in the world of scholars, while the other hardly succeeds in making any appreciable progress. Glass alone can reflect solar rays, not a clod of earth, howsoever polished.<sup>3</sup> This view is similar to that of Plato who has pointed out that education is not like putting sight into blind eyes; it is only turning the eyes to light.

**The Function of Nurture:** Though natural endowments thus play a great part, it was realised that they exist only in a potential condition in our childhood

1 अन्तः सारविहीनस्य सहायः किं करिष्यति ।

मलयेपि स्थितो वेणुर्वेणुरेव न चंदनः । S. R. B., p. 41. 7.

2 यस्य नास्ति स्वयं प्रज्ञा शास्त्रोक्तं किं करिष्यति ।

लोचनाभ्यां विहीनस्य दर्पणः किं करिष्यति । *Ibid*, p. 40, 1.

3 वितरति गुरुः प्राज्ञे विद्यां यथैव तथा जडे

न च खलु तयोन्नतिं शक्तिं करोत्यपहन्ति वा ।

भवति च पुनर्भूयान्भेदः फलं प्रति तद्यथा

प्रभवति मणिर्बिम्बोद्ग्राहे न चैव मृदां चयः ॥



and would not flower into perfection unless they are properly developed by training and education. One may be born in a Brahmana family on account of his past good *Karman* ; one may be also endowed by nature with the qualities of a Brahmana like self control and love of learning. Still he will not be a bit higher than a Shudra if he does not receive proper sacraments ( *Sanskāras* ) and gets the necessary education.<sup>1</sup> Past *Karman* may determine the mental and intellectual qualities of an individual. But they will deteriorate if he does not receive proper education, and improve, though within a limited degree, if he gets the benefit of good training under a competent teacher. That nature can thus be considerably modified by nurture seem to have been the considered opinion of ancient India educationalists from about the beginning of the Christian era. This view is similar to the theory of Stern who sought to effect a compromise between the extreme positions of Galton and Locke by maintaining that man is born with tendencies which are conditioned by heredity but which are transformed into the qualities of human personality through a process of development and training.

**The Influence of the Caste System :** The caste system has been an important feature of Hindu society for a long time and has naturally exercised considerable influence on the theory and practice of education in ancient India. Let us try to find out its extent. It is usually held that it had rigidly determined the profession and made the teaching line a monopoly of the Brahmanas. We however find that Kshattriya teachers of Vedic and philosophical subject existed

1 जन्मना जायते शूद्रः संस्काराद्द्विज उच्यते ।

विद्यया याति विप्रत्वं त्रिभिः श्रोत्रिय उच्यते ॥

down to the 6th century B. C. and that the keen intellect of the Brahmana community was for a long time utilised to further the bounds of human knowledge in several branches of non-Vedic studies. It was only in later times that religious and literary education came to be confined to the Brahmanas and professional and industrial training to non-Brahmanas.

**Caste System once flexible :** The caste system has got a long history and has undergone many changes and vicissitudes during the last three thousand years. It was formerly much less rigid than now. Interdining is an anathema to an orthodox Hindu today, Dharmaśāstra writers like Manu ( IV. 253 ) and Āpastamba ( II. 1. 3-4 ) however permit a Brahmana to take his meals in the house of a barber, a milkman and a tenant and employ a Shudra cook even for preparing the sacred sacrificial food. Intercaste marriages, which are still not permissible under the Hindu law, were allowed by the majority of Smiritis, provided the bridegroom belonged to a higher caste. In the realm of educational theory and practice also, we should therefore not be surprised if we find that some of the later theories were not subscribed to or followed in earlier times.

**Non-Brahmanas as Vedic Teachers :** It is well-known that the Smritis have laid down that Brahmanas alone should impart Vedic education. In the earlier period however such was not the case. There is evidence to show that non Brahmanas also sometimes used to become Vedic teachers; rituals have been prescribed to enable them to shine in that line.<sup>1</sup>

1 Cf. योऽब्राह्मणो विद्यामनूच्य नैव रोचेत स एतांश्चतुर्होतृन् व्याचक्षीत ।  
एतद्वै देवानां ब्रह्म निरुक्तं यच्चतुर्होतारस्तदेनं निरुच्यमानं प्रकाशं यमयति ॥

This need not cause any surprise, for some Kshatriyas figure among the composers of Vedic hymns also; the whole of the third book of the *Ṛg-veda* is a composition of the various member of the Kshatriya Viśvāmitra family. In the Upanishadic period Kshatriyas took an important part in the development of philosophy and were the exclusive custodians of many esoteric doctrines, which Brahmanas could learn only from them and not without some difficulty.<sup>1</sup> There are several cases of Brahmanas approaching renowned Kshatriya teachers like Aśvapati, Janaka and Pravāhaṇa Jaivali as humble students of philosophy and religion.<sup>2</sup> Dharmasūtras also contemplate the possibility of a Brahmana being a student of a non-Brahmana and enjoin and that during the period of studentship, he must offer the usual personal service to his non-Brahmana teacher.<sup>3</sup> We should therefore note that the caste system succeeded in making Vedic and religious education a monopoly for the Brahmanas only at about 300 B. C. Nor was it a lucrative monopoly in a practice; it was only a monopoly to beg. The income of even the most famous Vedic teachers was a precarious one and compared very poorly with the gains of a successful merchant or a captain.

### **Brahmanas as Teachers of non-Vedic Subjects :**

Smritis lay down that Brahmanas should not follow the professions of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas except in times of difficulties. This would naturally imply that Brahmanas did not figure as teachers in military or commercial lines. How could one become a teacher in a profession which one was not expected to follow ?

1 Ch. Up., V. 3. 7; Br. Up., II. 1. 15.

2 Br. Up., II. 1. 14, IV. 1. 1., Ch. Up., IV. 4. 1, etce.

3 अत्राह्वाणादध्ययनमनापदि । शुभ्रषाऽनुव्रज्या च यावदध्ययनम् ।

A. D. S 1. 2. 40-7. Cf. also A. D. S., II. 4. 25-7; G. D. S., VII. 1-31.

For a long time, however, Brahmanas were following a number of non-Vedic pursuits and professions and also figuring as their teachers. What can be more incompatible with the Brahmanical ideal of piety and religiousness than the military profession? And yet we find Brahmanas figuring as teachers of the military science. The Pāṇḍva and Kaurava heroes, who fought so bravely in the Mahābhārata was, were not trained by any Kshatriya teacher; their preceptor, Droṇāchārya was a Brahmana. Brahmanas, who were trainers of horses and elephants, are mentioned in Smṛitis (*Manu*, III. 162). Jātakas also show that at Taxila, Brahmanas used to impart education in several practical profession like the military art, medicine, surgery, snake charming etc. both to Brahmanas and Kshatriyas.<sup>1</sup> Dhanurveda lays down that Brahmanas are as eligible to become the teachers of the military science as Kshatriyas (1. 4.). Being as a rule more intelligent than members of other castes, they must have shone in these lines also, as for instance was the case with Droṇāchārya. It was only in later times, from c. 500 A. D. onwards, that Brahmanas ceased to be teachers of useful arts and professions owing to the growing rigour of the caste system. This was rather unfortunate, for it prevented the utilisation of the intellect of one of the most intelligent classes in society for expanding the boundaries of knowledge in the domain of practical sciences.

**Caste System and Curriculum : Domination of Vedic Studies :** Let us now find out the influence the caste system exercised on the curriculum. A perusal of the relevant rules of the Smṛitis produces the impression that Vedic studies must have dominated the course prescribed for the Brahmanas. It has been

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1 स्वत्तियमानवा ब्राह्मणमानवा च तस्सेव संतिके सिष्यं उगमहितुं गच्छन्ति।  
Asadisa J, No. 181; see also Thusa J. No. 358.

emphatically laid down that all Brahmanas should devote twelve years to Vedic studies after their Upanayana. Such, however, was not the case in actual practice. Only a small section of the Brahmana community,—probably not more than its one-fifth,—used to devote itself to Vedic studies, when new branches of knowledge like grammar, philosophy, law and classical Sanskrit literature came to be developed. For the preservation of the Vedic literature, the services of only a small section of the community were necessary; the rest were required to memorise the few Vedic *Mantras* necessary for daily religious purposes and encouraged to devote their main energy to the development of new branches of knowledge like philosophy, grammar, and classical Sanskrit literature, where they were able to make substantial contributions; which still continue to be highly valued both in India and abroad.

### **Vedic Studies of the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas :**

According to the *Smṛiti* rules, Kshatriyas and Vaishya also had to pursue Vedic studies after their Upanayana. These however were never deep or prolonged. In some *Jātaka* stories, we no doubt read that some princes used to study all the three Vedas as well as eighteen practical sciences<sup>1</sup>; in the *Mahābhārata* also we find that the Kaurava princes are represented as experts in Veda, and the various branches of the military science ( 1. 118 and 133 ). A perusal of the relevant passages shows that the writers of the above work were more anxious to enumerate all the known branches of knowledge and represent them as being mastered by their heroes, than in narrating the actual state of affairs in

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1 Cf. सोलसवस्सपदेसिको हुत्वा तक्खसिलायां सिप्पं उग्गण्हित्वा तिष्णं वेदानं पारं गत्वा अट्ठारसानं विज्जट्ठानं निष्कर्त्ति पापुनाति । *Dummedha J.No.50.*

their contemporary times. We have seen already that the Brahmanas, who did not intend to follow the theological career, contented themselves with the knowledge of only a few Vedic hymns; Kshatriyas and Vaishyas must have done the same; in later life they had no prospect of becoming Vedic teachers, and for their military or commercial career Vedic education was not useful or necessary. Vedic and philosophical studies were included in early times in the curriculum of the prince, but they were left out in the course of time. From about the beginning of the Christian era, the Upanayana ritual began to fall into disuse in the case of the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas and this naturally gave a great set back to their Vedic education.<sup>1</sup> Gradually they were reduced to the position of the Shudras and completely debarred from the Vedic education by about 1000 A. D. ( Alberuni, II, p. 136 ).

**Vedic Education and the Shudras :** Sacred texts have laid down in very emphatic terms that the Shudra should be rigorously excluded from the Vedic education and rituals. This injunction has been always carried out in practice.<sup>2</sup> The carpenter no doubt is declared to be eligible for Upanayana and Vedic studies in some early texts. He however was at that early period

1 Hence the observation of Dalhauzi, medieval writer at, *Susruta Śāstra*, X, 52, यथावर्णमिति ब्रह्मणास्थीं राजन्यो दण्डनीति वैश्यो वार्तामिति ।

2 यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीमावदानि जनेभ्यः । ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां शूद्राय चर्याय च स्वाय चारणाय च ॥ *Vaj. Sam.* XXVI 2 is taken by some as referring to the admission of the Shudras to the Vedic education. This, however, is very questionable interpretation; कल्याणी वाक् refers to the preceding stanza, which it is prayed here, may be applicable to the whole of humanity.

a member of the Aryan and not the Shudra community. The exclusion of the Shudras from the Vedic studies undoubtedly appears as unjustifiable to us at present, but there were peculiar circumstances that necessitated this step in early times. The art of writing was not utilised for the purpose of preserving the Vedic texts for a long time. The Aryan theologians believed that if there was the slightest mistake in the accent or the pronunciation of the Vedic *Mantras*, a disaster would inevitably issue.<sup>1</sup> As the Vedic Sanskrit was not the mother tongue of the Shudras, it was feared that Vedic hymns would be transformed out of recognition, if they were transmitted orally in Sudra families from generation to generation. In the eyes of the theologian, this would be a great disaster. Later on when female education began to lag behind and women as a class ceased to be educated in Sanskrit, it is interesting to note that the Brahmana theologians did not flinch from placing their own mothers, wives and daughters in the category of the Shudras and declaring unhesitatingly that they also were unfit for Vedic studies. Theological animus or pride was thus not at the root of the exclusion of the Shudras and women from the Vedic education. Nor did it amount to a total denial of religious education; for women and Shudras were permitted to get religious enlightenment from the study of *Smṛitis*, *Epics* and *Purāṇas*. Many of them became honoured saints and preachers in medieval times.

**Conclusion :** It will be thus seen that with the exception of the exclusion of the Shudras from the Vedic education, the caste system for a long time did not result in restricting professions to particular castes.

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1. Cf. मंत्री हीनः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा मिथ्याप्रयुक्तो न तमर्थमाह ।

स वाग्वज्रो यजमानं हिनस्ति यथेन्द्रशत्रुः स्वरतोऽपराधात् ॥

This was but natural. Teaching may be a fit profession for Brahmanas, but if some of them were intellectually inferior, their birth could not impart to them the necessary efficiency as teachers. Even a Brahmana writer therefore is constrained to observe that dull Brahmana children should follow the profession of the Kshatriya or the Vaishya.<sup>1</sup> Ambitious Brahmanas also could not be prevented from following the military profession, where glittering prizes awaited the successful adventurer. A Brahmana priest of holy Banaras is to be seen sending his son to Taxila to learn archery, because it was predicted that he was to be a king.<sup>2</sup> It was ambition alone that was responsible for sovereignty being vested in Brahmana families like those of the Śūngas, the Kanvas and the Kadambas. The recruitment to the army was not confined to the Kshatriya caste; inscriptions make it clear that it was very largely recruited from the agriculturists and Shudras. Dhanurveda also contemplates military education for all the four castes. It is interesting to note that when Yuan Chwang was in India in the second quarter of the 7th century A. D., the kings of Ujjain, Maheshvar and Assam were Brahmanas, those of Pariyatra and Kanauj, Vaishyas, and those of Matipura and Sindh, Shudras. If Members of all classes could become kings, it follows that they must be all following the military profession. The commercial and industrial lines were also very often followed by many Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. The caste system therefore made education rigid only to a limited degree and that too from c. 800 A. D.

**Caste System and Buddhist Education :** The caste system did not at all influence the education imparted

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1 राजन्यवैश्यकर्मा विद्याहीनः । G. D. S., I. 6, 16-

2 Sārabhanga J. No. 522.



in Buddhist centres of learning. This was but natural, for the Buddha was against the system and argued that the worth of a man should be determined by his actual merit, and not by his descent or family status. Persons were admitted to the Order irrespective of their castes; Upāli, one of the favourite disciples of the Buddha, was a barber before he joined the Order.<sup>1</sup> But though it is true that everybody could become a preacher after a certain number of years, it is interesting to note that among famous Buddhist teachers and scholars, the vast majority consists of those who had originally hailed from Brahmanical families. Thus Moggallāna, Sāriputta, Nāgasena, Vasubandhu and Nāgārjuna were all Brahmanas before their conversion. As far as the curriculum is concerned, it was predominantly religious and philosophical, as it was primarily intended for monks and nuns and not for the laity. We therefore need not consider whether the caste system in any way determined or affected the imparting of useful or professional education in Buddhist colleges.

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<sup>1</sup> Servants, slaves and debtors were refused admission to the order because the Buddha did not desire to affect the rights of third parties by the admissions made into the Church.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENT.

Teacher deeply revered-His training-His qualifications--High Code of his profession-Duties of the teacher-His income-Student's duties-Relations between teachers and students-Student's daily life—His duty to beg daily food - Rules of discipline—Were they unreasonable ?

**Introduction :** We have now seen what were the ideals, postulates and principles of the ancient Indian educational system. Now we propose to discuss the topics and problems connected with the qualifications of the teacher, the ideals which animated him, the position that was accorded him in society, the nature of the relationship that existed between him and his students and the important features of the student life. These are important topics, as they have a vital bearing on the success or failure of the educational system.

**Importance of teacher :** The importance which in modern times is attached to the institution or the *Alma Mater* was in ancient days attached to the teacher in India. This was but natural, for organised educational institutions came rather late into existence in this country, as was also the case in the West. The person who takes charge of immature children and makes them worthy and useful citizens in society was naturally held in high reverence. It was the function of the teacher to lead the student from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The lamp of learning is concealed under a cover, says one thinker ; the teacher removes it and lets out the light.<sup>1</sup> The student therefore must be

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1 Cf. यथा घटप्रतिच्छन्ना रत्नराजा महाप्रभा : ।

अकिंचित्कर्ता प्राप्तास्तद्विद्याश्चतुर्दश ॥

Quoted by Aparāka on Yaj I, 212.

very grateful to him and show him the highest possible reverence. He is to be revered even more than parents; to the latter, we owe our physical birth, to the former our intellectual regeneration. From the Vedic age down-wards the teacher has been all along designated as the spiritual and intellectual father of the student.<sup>1</sup> Without his help and guidance, no education is possible. He is in fact indispensable. This is graphically illustrated by the story of Ekalavya, who when refused admission to his School by Droṇa, prepared an image of the teacher under whom he longed to learn, and successfully finished his studies in archery under the inspiration that he received from the inanimate representation of his animate preceptor. Buddhists and Jains also attached equally great importance to the teacher. This reverence shown to the teacher need not surprise us, for it is now admitted on all hands that neither buildings nor equipment exercise such influence on students as is exercised by cultured and competent teachers, who instruct as well as inspire.

**Why the Teacher was revered :** The great importance that was attached to the teacher in the ancient system of education and the high reverence that was shown to him in society are not difficult to understand. Since the earliest times the Vedic learning is being transmitted orally in India from one generation to another. This continued to be the case even when the art of writing came into general vogue. The *Mahābhārata* condemns to hell a person who commits the Vedas to writing.<sup>2</sup> Great importance was attached to the proper accent and pronunciation in the Vedic recitation, and these

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1 Cf. आचार्य उपनयमानो ब्रह्मचारिणं कृणुते गर्भमन्तः । A.V.XI. 5.3 See also *Va Dh. S.*, 28 38 - 9 ; *Gau Dh.S.*, II., 10 ; *Manu* II, 170. *Bau. Dh. S.*, 1.2. 48 maintains that a *Srotriya* can never be regarded as issueless ; his students are his sons.

2. XIV. 106-92

could be correctly learnt only from the lips of a properly qualified teacher. The continuous transmission of the store of the Vedic knowledge, which society regarded as priceless, was possible only through the instrumentality of the teacher and his importance therefore could not be exaggerated. With the rise of the mystical systems of philosophy in the age of the Upanishads, the reverence for the Guru became still more intensified, for spiritual salvation depended almost entirely upon his proper guidance.<sup>1</sup> This deification of the philosophical Guru was not without its reaction in favour of the ordinary teacher, who taught disinterestedly without stipulating for any fees. We should further remember that books being dear and rare, the student had generally to rely upon his teacher alone to a much greater degree than is the case now.<sup>2</sup> In the case of profession, even when books exist in plenty, a good deal more has to be learnt from the teacher. So a competent and sympathetic teacher, who would unreservedly place at the disposal of his pupil the essence of all his experience, could hardly be overvenerated by the artisan apprentice working under him. The glorification of the teacher must have produced great psychological influence on students, for childhood is the hey day of personal influence.

1 नैषा मतिस्तर्केणापनेया प्रोक्तान्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ । K. Up. 11, 9.

तद्विज्ञानाय गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥

Mun, Up. 1, 2, 3.

2 Mss. were often unreliable, so there was prejudice against students, who had not read under a teacher; cf. :—

पुस्तकप्रत्ययाधीतं नाधीतं गुरुसंनिधौ ।

भ्राजते न सभामध्ये जारगर्भं इव स्त्रियः ॥

Nārda quoted by Pā. Mā, at I, 38.

**Teacher's Training :** Though the teacher was held in high reverence, it does not appear that any institutions like Teachers' Training Colleges of the modern time existed in the past. One of the hopes expressed at the convocation (*Samavartana*) was that the graduate may have the good luck of attracting students from all quarters.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore clear that no further training was deemed necessary for the graduate in order to qualify him for the teaching profession. The reasons for this are not far to seek. Students received individual attention and lessons from their teachers, as will be shown in Chapter VI. During their educational course Vedic students could note how precisely teachers used to pronounce and intonate the Vedic *Mantras* when teaching them to their students. As far as the study of other branches like grammar, logic, rhetoric, philosophy, etc. was concerned, no special training was necessary for fostering and developing the powers of exposition and elucidation of students specialising in them. In the modern system of education students can get their degrees by listening to their teachers in the class-rooms and answering the question papers in the examination halls. Such was not the case in ancient India. Several times during his course the student was called upon to pass through the fiery ordeal of learned debates (*Sāstrārtha*), when he was called upon to defend his own position and attack that of the opponent in heated discussions. Powers of debate and discussion were thus remarkably developed by the time the student finished his education. Advanced students were also given opportunities of teaching the beginners in most of the educational institutions.<sup>2</sup> The graduate therefore had a fairly

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<sup>1</sup> *Bau. Gr. S. II, 6.*

<sup>2</sup> See *Sūta-Smā-jatākā* No 7. 537, Of the advanced scholars at  
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good teaching experience to his credit by the time he left his *alma mater*. The absence of training colleges therefore did not materially tell upon the efficiency of the teachers at least as far as higher education was concerned.

**Qualifications of the Teacher :** Since the teacher was held in high veneration, he was naturally expected to possess several qualifications. The student was to look upon the teacher as the ideal person of very high character. He was to be patient and treat his students impartially. Above all he was to be well grounded in his own branch of knowledge ; he was to continue his reading throughout his life.<sup>1</sup> Profound scholarship however was not sufficient for the teacher. He must have a fluent delivery, readiness of wit, presence of mind, a great stock of interesting anecdotes and must be able to expound the most difficult texts without any difficulty or delay.<sup>2</sup> In a word, he should be not only a scholar but also an adept in teaching ; then only he would be a great teacher, as pointed out by Kālidāsa.<sup>3</sup> The teacher must further be able to inspire as well as to instruct ; his piety, character, scholarship and cultured life should be able to exercise a subtle and permanent influence over

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Nālandā and Valabhi, I-tsing says that they passed two or three years in these Universities, *instructed by their teachers and instructing others*. I-tsing, p. 177.

1 यावज्जीवमधीते विप्रः ।

2 प्रवृत्तवाक् चित्रकथः ऊह्वान् प्रतिभानवान् ।

आशु ग्रन्थस्य वक्ता च यः स पण्डित उच्यते ॥

Mbh., V. 83. 83.

3 शिष्टा क्रिया कस्यचिदात्मसंस्था संक्रान्तिरन्यस्य विशेषरूपा ।

यस्योभयं साधु स शिक्षकाणां धुरि प्रतिष्ठापयितव्य एव ॥

Mālavikāgnimitram. Act. I.

the young students sitting at his feet for their lessons.

**High Code of the Teaching Profession :** The teaching profession had a very high code in ancient India. There was often competition for getting more students ; but if one teacher was found to be less well-grounded than his rival in his subject, he was expected to close down his school and become a disciple of his rival in order to get full knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The teacher was to begin the education of the student as soon as he was satisfied that the latter was sincere and possessed the necessary calibre ; he was not to postpone instructions unnecessarily.<sup>2</sup> The duty to teach was imperative ;<sup>3</sup> all students possessed of the necessary calibre

1 G. Br., 1. 1. 31 shows how on being defeated in debate with Mandgalya, Maitreya at once closed his school and became the pupil of his vanquisher in order to become better grounded in his subject. The debate between Sankara and Mandana Misra was also held on the usual condition that the vanquished should become the disciple of vanquisher.

2 Usually teachers were allowed to watch the conduct and calibre of the new entrants for about six months or a year ; but after that period they were bound to start instructions. If they did not do so, they were saddled with all the sins of the students they were keeping in suspense; cf संवत्सरोषिते शिष्ये गुरुज्ञानमनिदिशन् । हरते दुष्कृतं तस्य शिष्यस्य वसतो गुरुः ॥

Kurma P. in VMS., p. 515

*Ashtāṅga-hridaya*, Sūtrasthāna, chap. 2, allows only a six months' period of waiting for medical students. Longer periods of waiting like 5 or 32 years that we sometimes come across in Tantras ( e. g. *Tantraraja-tantra*, II, 37-8 ) and Upanishads ( e. g. *Ch. Up.* VIII, 7. 2, 3. ) were intended for those who aspired to be initiated in secret and esoteric philosophical doctrines, and not for ordinary students.

3 The *Smṛitikaustubha* narrates how a teacher was condemned to be a mango tree in his next existence for his failure to impart Vedic knowledge ; cf स चूतवृक्षो विप्रोऽभूद्विद्वान्वै वेदपारगः । विद्या न दत्ता विप्रेभ्यस्तेनैव तद्वत्तां गतः । There is an obvious subtle humour in the retribution imposed upon the teacher who would not give what he possessed to others ; as a mango tree he would have to give all fruits to others and retain none for himself.

and qualifications were to be taught, irrespective of the consideration as to whether they would be able to pay any honorarium or not. It should not be forgotten that the honorarium, even when available, was usually hardly commensurate with the services rendered by the teacher. We shall see in Chap. IV. how no regular fees were charged by ancient Indian teachers and institutions. The poorest of the poor could demand and get education from the teacher by merely agreeing to do household work in the teacher's house. Further the teacher was required to teach every thing he knew to his disciple ; he could withhold nothing under the apprehension that his pupil may one day outshine him in the profession.<sup>1</sup> If he did so, he ceased to be entitled to be called an *āchārya*<sup>2</sup>. How generous and large-hearted teachers usually were in this connection can be judged from the conduct and exclamation of Alara Kalāma, when the future Buddha had finished his education under him :—

“Happy friend are we in that we look upon such a venerable one, such a fellow ascetic as you. The doctrine which I know, you too know, and the doctrine which you know, I too know. As I am, so you are as, you are, so am I. Pray, sir, let us be joint wardens of this company.”<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that the teachers in ancient India regarded their profession as nobler and higher than any other profession. They no doubt lived in poverty, but were respected on account of

1 *Milinda-Paṇha*. 1. p. 142.

2 *आचार्योऽप्यनाचार्यो भवति श्रुतात्परिहरमाजः* । *A. D. S.*, 11. 8. 28.

3 *Further Dialogues of the Buddha Ariyapariyesana sutta*, p. 116. Compare also the spirited protest of Bhrāradvāja when he apprehended that his royal pupil was suspecting that he was not teaching him all that he knew :—



it by the society. Those who were in the charge of preservation and transmission of education and culture were held in particularly high esteem because of their voluntary poverty. Wealth and respectability were not regarded as inseparable as is often the tendency in modern times.

**Duties of the Teacher :** The relationship between the teacher and the pupil was regarded as filial in character<sup>1</sup> both by Hindu and Buddhist thinkers; the teacher therefore had to discharge several duties in addition to imparting intellectual education and helping spiritual progress. He was the spiritual father of his pupils and was held morally responsible for their drawbacks.<sup>2</sup> His extra-academic duties were varied and numerous. He was always to keep a guard over the conduct of his pupil. He must let him know what to cultivate and what to avoid; about what he should be earnest and what he may neglect. He must instruct him as to sleep and as to keeping himself in health, and as to what food he may take and what he may reject. He should advise him as to the people whose company he should keep and as to the villages ( and localities ) he may frequent.<sup>3</sup> If he was poor, he was to help him in getting some financial help from people of influence and substance in the locality. [He was to arrange for his food and clothing; the teachers of

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नाहमिदं वेद । यद्यवेदिषं कथं ते नावक्ष्यमिति ।

समूलो वैष परिशुष्यति योजनृतमभिवदति ॥

*Pr. Up., VI.I*

<sup>1</sup> Cf पुत्रमिवैनमभिकांक्षन् *Ap. Dh., S., 1.28. M.V. 1.32.*

<sup>2</sup> अतीत्य बंधूनवलंध्य शिष्यानाचार्यमागच्छति शिष्यदोषः ॥

*Panchatantra 1.21*

<sup>3</sup> *Millinda-panha* Vol. 1, p. 142.

Sanskrit *Pāthasālās* in eastern India used to do this till quite recently. If the student was ill, the teacher was to nurse and serve him as a father would do his son.<sup>1</sup>

**Income of the Teacher ; Early Period :** We have no data to enable us to get a precise idea of the normal income of the teacher in the early period. In ancient days in India as in the West, there was no Education Department prescribing a scale of salaries, which was more or less followed in private institutions also. Educational institutions themselves came into existence only at about the 5th Century A. D. We have already seen how the educational theory and practice prohibited the teacher from charging any fixed scale of fees from his students. The teacher in ancient India therefore had, as a general rule, no fixed income. We have seen already that usually he was also a priest. His income therefore consisted partly of offerings obtained by him on the occasions of rituals and sacrifices and partly of voluntary gifts given by his students either during or after their course. There was to be no stipulation for these presents; so they varied with the financial capacity of the guardians. At Taxila we learn that 'world-renowned' teachers used to have 500 students reading under them, and that the rich ones among the latter used to offer a fee of a thousand coins.<sup>2</sup> This however does not enable us to get any accurate idea of the teacher's income. The number of students, 500, is conventional<sup>3</sup>

1 The testimony of I-tsing shows that this was also done in Buddhist monasteries; p. 120. The Buddha has left express injunctions on the point: *Mahāvagga*, I. 26. 1-6.

2 The coins were probably silver *Kāishāpanas*, each weighing about one third of the modern rupee.

3 Usually each teacher had only about 15 to 20 students reading under him; see Chp. VI.

and not real and we do not know whether the fee of 1000 coins offered was for one year or for the whole course, and whether it included the expenses of boarding and lodging also, which were normally offered by the Taxila teacher. We therefore can form no definite idea of the income of the teacher during the early period.

**Income of the Teacher in later Period :** We however get more definite data about the teacher's income from the time educational institutions were evolved. Teachers at Buddhist Universities of Nālandā and Vikramaśilā were monks and so required no salaries; the administration had to spend for each monk-teacher just the amount necessary for the maintenance of only four students.<sup>1</sup> In south Indian colleges the annual salary of teachers varied according to their qualifications and subjects from 160 to 200 maunds of the rice.<sup>2</sup> This income was about two and half times the income of the village accountant or the carpenter, and was equal to about four times the amount necessary for meeting the normal food expenses of a family of five persons. We would not be wrong in supposing that as a general rule in ancient India the Sanskrit teacher imparting higher education received a similar income. He was thus neither suffering from abject poverty nor rolling in superfluous wealth. Society enabled him to lead a life of moderate comforts according to the ideal of plain living and high thinking. We can now understand why learned teachers were exempted from

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<sup>1</sup> Bose, *Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities* p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *S. I. E. R.*, 1917 No. 333 The total cost of one good meal for one year was about 8 maunds of rice. The salaries above mentioned were given in the college at Ennayiram; in other institutions they were sometimes different. Sometimes inscriptions disclose that the Veda teachers used to get only 30 maunds of rice per annum, in such cases they were probably part-time teachers and were expected to supplement their income from the proceeds of the priestly profession.

taxation. The income of the primary teacher was naturally less than that of the Sanskrit teacher. In Bengal at the advent of the British rule, the income of the primary teacher was just equal to that of the *patwari*, who collected the village revenue or the *amin*, who settled village disputes on behalf of Zemindar.<sup>1</sup> Probably the same was the case also during the ancient Indian period. This income however was not in the form of a fixed salary, but had to be collected in the form of voluntary and irregular subscriptions from the villagers and guardians.

**Duties of Students :** Let us now survey the duties of students towards their teachers. The student was to hold his teacher in deep reverence and honour him like the king, parents and god.<sup>2</sup> His outward behaviour must be in conformity with the rules of decorum and good manners; he ought to get up and salute his teacher in the proper way, he ought not to occupy a higher seat or wear a gaudier dress. Reviling and backbiting are severely condemned. It however did not follow that the student was to connive blindly at his teacher's misconduct. Both the Buddha<sup>3</sup> and Apastamba<sup>4</sup> who enjoin high reverence for the teacher, lay down that the student should draw his teacher's attention in private to his failings, dissuade him from wrong views if he happened to be inclined towards them; the duty of obedience comes to an end if the

1 Stark, *Vernacular Education In Bengal*, pp. 28—48.

2 Manu II, 200 ff. Cf. also *Choraka Samhitā*, *Vimāna-sthāna*. VIII 4 :—

तमग्निवच्च देववच्च राजवच्च पितृवच्च भर्तृवच्चाप्रमत्तः परिचरेत् ।

3 MV., I. 25. 10. 20.

4 प्रमादनाचार्यस्य बुद्धिपूर्वकं वानियमातिक्रमं रहसि बोधयेत् । 1.2.6.13.

teacher transgresses the limits of Dharama.<sup>1</sup> His commands were to be regarded as *ultra vires*, if they were likely to jeopardise the student's life or were against the law of the land.

**Duty of personal Service:** Both in Buddhist monasteries and Hindu Gurukulas, the student was expected to do personal service to the teacher like a son, suppliant or slave.<sup>2</sup> He was to give him water and tooth stick, carry his seat and supply him bath water ( *M. V.*, I. 25, 11-12 ). If necessary, he was to cleanse his utensils and wash his clothes.<sup>3</sup> He was further to do all sundry work in his monastery or his teacher's house, like cleansing the rooms, bringing fuel or guarding cattle. This custom existed in the Vedic age<sup>4</sup> and was widely prevalent in later times also. Tradition asserts that even great personages like Śrī-Krishṇa had deemed it an hour to do all kind of menial work in their preceptor's house during their student days. It was held that no progress in knowledge was possible without service in the teacher's house.<sup>5</sup>

**Limitation on this Duty :** There were, however, limitations to this duty to work. The teacher was prohibited from assigning any work that was likely to interfere with the studies of the student. The duty was further more nominal than real in the case of

<sup>1</sup> आचार्याधीनो भवति अन्यत्राघर्माचरति । *G. D. S.* III 1.15

गुरोरप्यबलिप्तस्य कार्याकार्यमजानतः ।

उत्पथप्रतिपन्नस्य न्याय्यं भवति शासनम् ॥ *Mbh.* 1. 140. 54.

<sup>2</sup> पुत्रवद्दासवदर्थिवच्चानुचरता त्वया.....।

<sup>3</sup> *Mahāvagga* 1. 25. 2, *Gunaga Jātaka* No: 157.

<sup>4</sup> *G. B.*, 1, 2, 1-8.

<sup>5</sup> गुरुशुश्रूषया ज्ञानं शान्तिं योगेन विन्दति । *Mbh* , V. 36. 52.

paying scholars. We have seen already that the duty to teach was imperative and a teacher could not refuse a student merely because he was poor. Poor students were admitted if they were—willing to help the teacher in his household or farm work, this duty to work was effectively operative only in their cases. At Taxila the students who used to pay their teachers honorarium in advance used to stay in their houses like eldest sons, doing no household work and spending all their time in study. Free students,—*dhammān-tevāsikas*,—on the other hand used to do all kind of manual work for their teachers. They used to work by day, when paying scholars were receiving their lessons; teachers used to hold special classes for them at night with a view to see that their education did not suffer on account of their day's work on the farm or in household.<sup>1</sup> At Nālandā also secular students who sought free boarding, lodging and education had to do some manual work for the monasteries.<sup>2</sup> It may be added before concluding that the teacher was not entitled to demand any service after the student had finished his course. If two persons were mutual teachers of each other, then also service could be expected.<sup>3</sup>

### **Mutual Relations between Teachers and Students :**

Public educational institutions, where teachers used to teach students admitted by the managing body, were not many in ancient India. The relations between

1 Cf धम्मतेवासिका आचरियस्स कम्मं कत्वा रत्तिं सिप्पमुमाण्हन्ति  
आचरियभागदायका गेहे जेट्ठपुत्ता विद्य हत्वा सिप्पमेव उग्गण्हन्ति ।

2 Takmakusu, I-tsing, p. 106.

3 न समावृत्ते समादेशो विद्यते । ब्रह्मणि मिथो विनियोगे न गति-  
विद्यते । ब्रह्म वर्धत इत्युपदिशति । A. D. S, I. 4. 13. 17.

the teacher and the student were therefore direct and not through any institution. The student usually went to such a teacher as attracted his attention by his reputation and scholarship ; the teacher selected such students as appeared to him sincere, zealous and well-behaved. The student usually lived either under the roof of the teacher or under his direct supervision. The teacher not only did not demand any fee but also helped the poor students in getting food or clothing. He nursed him if he was ill. The student naturally lived as a member of the household of the teacher and helped him in doing the household work, if necessary. The teacher on the other hand would not expect this work if the student was a paying boarder and would limit it to the minimum in the case of poor students.<sup>1</sup> Under such circumstances the relations between the teacher and the student were naturally very cordial and intimate ; they were united, to quote the words of the Buddha, 'by mutual reverence, confidence and communion of life.'<sup>2</sup> Students usually did not desert one teacher for another merely out of freakishness.<sup>3</sup> Teachers would often entertain genuine

1 Cf. न चैनमध्ययनविघ्नेन आत्मार्थेषूपरुध्यादनापत्सु । *Ap. Dh. S.*

1 2. 8. The teacher was also responsible for the safety of students when he sent them out for his own works ; if any mishap overtook them he was held guilty. Cf. गुरुप्रयुक्तश्चेन्निघ्नयेत (शिष्यः) त्रीन्कृच्छ्रांश्चरेत् । *Bau, Dh. S., II. 1. 27,*

2 *M. V. I. 32. I.*

3. Students deserting their teachers without any reason are ridiculed as crows by Pātañjali, cf. यो गुरुकुलं गत्वा न चिरन्तिष्ठति स उच्यते तीर्थकाक इति । *Vol. I. p. 391.*

In *Uttarāmacharit*, II, we no doubt find Ātreya leaving Vālmiki, and going to Agastya. But the reason was that she was too dull to read along with Kusa and Lava. Of course if a student wanted to learn a different branch of learning he would leave his old teacher and go to the expert in particular branch.

affection for their students and would sometimes select some of them as their sons-in-law. Later authorities have laid it down that a student cannot marry his teacher's daughter, because she stood in the relation of a sister to him; Kacha refused to marry Devayānī on that account. This rule seems to have been framed to prevent complications likely to arise in practice when young student used to live and board with their teachers. But earlier practice seems to have been different. In Jātaks we come across several cases of teachers marrying their daughters to their most promising students; the custom was so deep rooted in certain teacher's families that students had often no option in the matter, even if they were not in favour of the match.<sup>1</sup>

**Mutual Relations in after-life :** The cordial relations that existed between the teacher and the student continued also in their after-life. Even when the student had returned home after his education, he was to call on his teacher frequently, bringing him some presents, it may be even a tooth-stick.<sup>2</sup> Teachers also used to return these visits.<sup>3</sup> The teacher's visit was not without its benefit to the student; he used to utilise the occasion to ascertain how far the ex-student was keeping up his reading and studies. In the Ana-bhirati Jātaka<sup>4</sup> the ex-student informs his teacher that he was quite-up-to-date in his studies for some time after he had left his school, but admits that he had forgotten some of his Vedic *Mantras* since

1 See Silavimansa Jātaka, No. 305, also No. 374. In Mahamagga Jātaka, we find the student marrying his teacher's daughter because there was no option for him in the matter. He was against the match.

2 Ap. Dh. S., 1, 2, 8. 22.

3 Jātaka No. 180.

4 No. 185.



the time he was married ; he however promises to mend the matters without delay. The mutual contact between the teacher and the student thus continued in the after life and was not without mutual benefit.

Human nature being what it is, there were also some rare exceptions in this connection. Jātakas ( e. g. No 243 ) sometimes refer to students challenging their teachers for a debate, but they were severely dealt with by the public opinion. In the above case the student concerned was pelted to death by the public.

**The daily Life of the Student :** Let us now see what was the daily life of the student. Naturally it differed in different courses and we have detailed information only about the religious and literary education. The students taking these courses used to get up early in the morning before birds had begun to stir,<sup>1</sup> i. e. at about 4-30 A. M. Then they used to attend to morning functions, take their bath and offer their prayers. Vedic students used to spend a good deal of the morning time in performing various morning rituals connected with fire sacrifices ; this afforded them practical training in the rituals they were expected to perform in their after-life. Other students contented themselves with their prayers ( *sandhyā* ) and spent the rest of the morning either in learning new lessons or in revising old ones. At about 11, A. M. this work would come to an end and students used to break off for their meals. Those staying with their teachers or in boarding houses used to get ready meals served out for them ; those who were poor used to go out to collect cooked food for their meals. After the noon meal there followed a period of rest of about an hour or so ; and teaching started at about 2 P. M. and went on till the evening. We sometimes get references to students spending their

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1 T. S. VI. 4 8. A. Br, II, 15

evening in collecting sacred fuel for sacrifices ( *Jataka* No. 150 ) ; but this must have been true of Vedic students of the early period only. Evening was probably spent in physical exercises. At sunset they offered usual prayers, attended to fire sacrifices, and then took their supper. Poor students, who had to work by day in the teacher's house or elsewhere, used to spend a considerable part of the night in studies. We should not forget that paper and printing were unknown and books were rare and costly ; so there was little of homework possible, except the revision and recapitulation of the lessons learnt in the teacher's presence. Students of sculpture, architecture, painting, smithy, carpentry etc. spent most of the day in the teacher's workshop, learning the details and the technique of the art and trade, and often accompanying and helping the teacher as apprentices in the professional work that he may have undertaken in the town or the village. It will be thus seen that the education system tried to reproduce in the student life the atmosphere and the conditions existing outside in actual life both in the case of religious and industrial students.

**The student life and the duty to beg :** The begging of the daily food has been enjoined on the student as a religious duty. This injunction occurs in sacred texts from the Vedic age downwards<sup>1</sup>; nay, some texts lay it down that the student must beg his food both morning and evening.<sup>2</sup> It has been declared that no food is so holy for the student as the food he obtains by begging at midday.<sup>3</sup>

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1 *A. V.*, XI. 5, 9, *Go Gr. S.*, II. 10, *Dr. Gr. S.* II. 5, 16, *Man* II. 65.

2 *Jat. Gr. S.*, I. 18. *Ap. Dh. S.* I, 1. 3. 24-5.

3 शाकभक्षाः पयोभक्षा ये चान्ये यावशाक्तिः ॥

सर्वे ते भैक्षभिक्षस्य कलां नाहन्ति षोडशीम् ॥ *Atri in SOS* p. III

**Why begging food was prescribed :** The rule of begging was laid down for the student in order to teach him humility and made him realise that it was due to the sympathy and help of society that he was learning the heritage of the race, and being enabled to follow a profession that would secure him a living. This rule further removed the distinction between the rich and the poor and brought education within the reach of the poorest. It was also useful in reminding society of its duty and responsibility about the education of the rising generation. Civilisation will not progress if each generation does not take proper steps to transmit its heritage to the next. Hindu thinkers therefore made it an incumbent duty for all householders to offer cooked food to the begging student ; a householder refusing his request was threatened with serious spiritual sanctions.<sup>1</sup> In medieval universities of Europe, a very large number of students used to maintain themselves by begging out of sheer necessity ; in ancient India begging was elevated into a duty of the student life. It may however be pointed out that our educationalists have pointed out that a student can beg food just sufficient for his needs ; if he collected more, he would be guilty of theft.<sup>3</sup> Nothing but food just sufficient for his maintenance was to be collected by the student ; if he was offered clothes, cash etc., he was to give it to his teacher as part of his honorarium.<sup>2</sup> Similarly he could not have recourse

1 Cf. स्त्रीणां प्रत्याचक्षाणां समाहितो ब्रह्मचारी इष्टं दत्तं हुतं प्रजां पशुं ब्रह्मवर्चसमन्नाद्यं वृङ्क्ते । *Ap. Dh.*, s. 1: 3, 24-25;

तस्माद् ह वै ब्रह्मचारिसंघं चरंतं न प्रत्याचक्षीत । *B. D. S.*, 1.3, 25

2 अहारादधिकं वर्णी न क्वचिद्भूक्षमाचरेत् ।

युज्यते स्तेयदोषेण कामतोऽधिकमाहरन् ॥ *Manu in VMS*, p. 4.46

यदन्यानि द्रव्याणि यथालाभमुपहरति दक्षिणा एव ताः । *A. D. S.*,

1.3.3.

to begging when his education was over,<sup>1</sup> except for the purpose of collecting money for offering a suitable honorarium to his preceptor. Sums collected for this purpose were to be given to the teacher; if he did not choose to have the amount of any portion of it, the money was to be spent for religious purposes; it was never to be taken for himself either by the student or by his father.<sup>2</sup> When the honorarium of the teacher was paid, the ex-student was never permitted to beg any more. Society was morally bound to support every poor student who was honestly struggling to educate himself; when however he was educated, he was expected to stand on his own legs.

**How far was the rule to beg followed :** There is clear evidence to show that Smritis themselves did not expect the rule of begging to be literally followed by all students, both rich and poor. They have laid down a penance, only if the student did not beg at least once in the week.<sup>3</sup> This shows that the rule of begging was a mere formality in the case of rich students and a reality only in the case of the poor ones.<sup>4</sup> When

1 समावृत्तस्य भिक्षाऽशुचिकरा । B. D. S. II, 1, 53 ; see also S. Br., XI, 3, 3. 7.

2 Cf. समावृत्तो मात्रे दद्यात् । माता पितरम् । भर्ता गुरुम् । धर्मकृत्ये वा विनियोजयेत् । A. D. S., II. 7. 15.

In the well known story of Kautsa in the *Raghuvamśa*, we find the pupil declining to accept for himself the extra amount of money that he had obtained from king Raghu whom he had requested for a donation for his *Gurudakṣiṇā*.

3 न चैनं सप्तम्यभिक्षिता यायात् । B. D. S., I. 2. 52.

4 There are also other indication in Smritis to show that begging was not a reality in the case of all. It has been laid down by Sumantu ( quoted in VMS. p. 486 ) that students under 12 should take their food early in the morning ; begging should be resorted only after 12; cf., अश्वनीयादष्टमर्षस्तु ब्रह्मचारी प्रगे सदा ।

circumstances permitted, Smṛitis have allowed students to take their food in the house of their preceptors.<sup>1</sup> Well-to-do students at Taxila were generally living and boarding at their teachers' houses. In richly endowed colleges like those at Nālandā, Salotgi and Ennayiram, arrangements were made by the college administration for the free boarding of students from generous endowments received for the purpose; begging food was not necessary at these places. Sometimes, as at Banaras for instance, such arrangements were independently made by rich citizens of the locality.<sup>2</sup> Begging food was not necessary at such places. The Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang attributes the fame of Indian scholars for deep scholarship to the circumstance that students in India have not to worry about their food, clothing and medicines.<sup>3</sup> It will be thus seen that begging was elevated into a duty for the student, primarily for the purpose of bringing education within the reach of the poorest, and secondarily for removing the superiority complex from the mind of rich students; he was the ideal student who lived by begging and not who lived on his family's support. The rule was not intended to be literally followed by all students every day.

**Rules of discipline :** Let us now survey and comment upon the rules of discipline prescribed for students.<sup>4</sup>

( Continued from the last page )

तदूर्ध्वमाद्वादशाब्दादशनीयात्संगवे सदा ॥ तदूर्ध्वं गृह्णद्भिक्षां भोजनं च समाचरेत् ।

The view of Krishṇājini is also the same *Ibid.*

1 भैक्षार्चार्थवृत्तिः स्यात् । *M. Gr. S.*, I. 1. 3; see also *Manu* II. 142.

2 Losaka Jātaka, No 41 ( c. 500 B. C. ) and Bernier p, 335, (17th century A. D.) both refer to the arrangements made by the rich citizens of Banaras for distributing *khichḍī* to poor students.

3. Beal. *Life of Yuan Chwang* p. 113.

4. For the rules of the students' life, see *Manu*, II. 175ff., *Yaj.* I. 28 ff.; *Gau. Dh. S.* I. 2; *As. Gr. S.* I. 22 *Dr. Gr. S.* II. 5, etc.

It was felt that student's life should be characterised by dignity, decorum and self-discipline and should be devoted to acquire a grounding not only in learning but also in the culture and religion of the race. In order to infuse piety, it was therefore laid down that they should regularly offer the prescribed prayers and sacrifices both morning and evening. In order to inculcate good etiquette and manners, it was insisted that they should show proper courtesy and respect to their elders and teachers. The duties towards the latter have been described already. In order to develop character, emphasis was given on moral earnestness; lying, slandering and backbiting were never to be indulged in. Students were to observe strict celibacy even in speech and thought. Strength of mind and character is developed if we learn to deny to ourselves our natural desires and inclinations<sup>1</sup>; rules of discipline therefore laid down that articles like meat, sweetmeats, spices, ornaments and garlands, which have a natural attraction for the youth and tend to accentuate the sex impulse, should be tabooed to students. Even royal students, staying in a *Gurukula* were not allowed to have any private purse, lest they should secretly purchase prohibited articles<sup>2</sup>. Plain living and high thinking was to be the student's ideal: they were to shave their heads clean or keep matted hair: no time was to be wasted in oiling and dressing the hair. Students must take the bath once in the day; but pleasure baths were forbidden. Shoes, umbraellas and cots were not to be used as a general rule. Food and dress were to be simple but sufficient. The aim in prescribing these rules was to enable

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1 This was the view of Locke also; Graves, *Great Educationalists* p. 61.

2 The prince of Junha Jātaka could only promise that he could compensate the poor Brahmana for the breakage of his bowl only when he later returned to Banaras and became a king. Obviously he had no privy purse. Jātakas, Vol. V. p. 466.

students to form a number of useful habits during the formative period of childhood and adolescence, which were expected to be of good use to them throughout their life. And finally students were to attend their classes regularly, listen to lessons attentively and master and digest carefully all that was taught before the school met the next day.

**How far relaxation was permitted :** Of the above rules, those relating to religious duties and moral behaviour, were particularly emphasised and strictly enforced ; modifications however were permitted in the case of the rest, if demanded by special circumstances. Thus the prohibition against the use of shoes and umbrellas was not rigorously enforced in ancient India as in ancient Sparta ; the idea was that students should not be so soft as to require these articles when moving about on good roads in villages and towns<sup>1</sup> under normal circumstances. Students going to thorny forests in search of the sacred fuel (*samidhs*) or undertaking a long journey to distant places like Taxila over the burning plains of northern India<sup>2</sup>, were permitted the use of both shoes and umbrellas. Similarly occasional exceptions were permitted in the case of the use of sweetmeats, when students were invited to some religious function or feast like a Śrāddha. The use of oils was permitted in some localities once a week probably after the shave<sup>3</sup>. Cots also were probably permitted in swampy or snake-infested areas.

**Were rules of discipline unreasonable ? :** The rules of discipline were on the whole reasonable for the

1 Cf. न ग्रामोपनिही । *Dr*, G. S. II. 5.

2 See Tilamutt̥hi Jātaka, No. 252, where students coming to Taxila from Banaras are seen to be equipped with shoes and umbrellas:

3 Such was the case in the college at Tirumukhudal in the 11th century A.D., see *E*, I. XXI p. 223.

age. They were intended to infuse piety, teach manners, promote self-control, discipline, the will and facilitate the formation of good habits. The complaint that they were too ascetic is not true; students were required only to control their passions and desires and not to kill them, as was recommended in the case of ascetics. Strict celibacy was insisted upon, but that was for the purpose of promoting concentration in studies and the development of the body. At the end of the course, students were enjoined to marry. At Sparta students' food was both plain and scanty. In India it was only plain; the educationalists had realised that the body is developed and built up during the childhood and adolescence and have therefore permitted students to take as much food as was demanded by the needs of their developing constitution. In the light of these facts the observation of a recent writer that the student life in ancient India was very severe because it required a stay at a stranger's place, demanded a beggar's or a menial's life and was denied all pleasures of life<sup>1</sup> will appear to be considerably wide of the mark. Society did not regard the student life as a proper period for enjoying the pleasures of life. Its standards of plain living also were naturally much different from those of the modern age, dominated by the novel, the drama and the cinema. Stay at a stranger's place was nothing else than the stay at a boarding house. The beggar's life was the mere ideal, recommended with a view to bring education within the reach of all; it was a reality only in the case of the poor and a mere formality in the case of the rest. Menial duties like personal service at the teacher's household were expected to be performed only by the poor students, who were given free tuition by the teacher; they were a mere formality in the case of the rest.

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<sup>1</sup> Bokil : *The History of Education in India*, Part I, p. 151.



Self denial was of course expected on a fairly large scale for reasons considerably similar to those advanced by Locke. As strength of body lies chiefly in being able to endure hardships, so also does that of mind. It was rightly felt that man should be able to deny himself his own desires, cross his own inclination and follow what pure reason dictated as best, though his natural inclinations may lean the other way. Locke has gone to the extent of saying that he would advise that children should be taught to curb their longings even from their cradles. The ideas underlying the Hindu code of the student's discipline were similar. Our educationists however allow the child to have a free life upto the age of 8 or 9 ; it was only after this age that the discipline of Brahmacharya was prescribed for it.

## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATION AND FINANCE

Private teacher the pivot of the system--How organised institutions arose—Organisation of Buddhist universities and Hindu temple colleges—School and college buildings—Boardings for students—Payment of fees how far obligatory—Admission procedure—The size of classes—School hours—Duration of the college session—Organisation and duration of courses—Longer courses for experts—Life long students.

Educational finance—The quota of ordinary men—Of rich men—The example of the Punjab—Government contribution in direct forms—Government help without Government control—State help in other countries in contemporary time.

**Introduction :** The history of ancient Indian education extends over several centuries, and so we naturally come across different types of educational organisations in different ages. In the pre-historic period down to about 1000 B. C. the family was the only educational agency both for the literary and professional education ; we have already shown in Chap. II how it used to discharge this function. As education began to become more complex and exacting, the specialist came into the field in the form of the private teacher. He continued to be in its sole and undisputed possession till about the early centuries of the Christian era, when organised educational institutions came into existence in connection with the Buddhist monasteries. In a few centuries, Hinduism copied the Buddhist example and organised its own temple colleges. Monastic universities and temple colleges were however confined to some famous centres of learning ; private teachers still continued to be the main stay of the educational system throughout the middle ages. In medieval times the Mathas of the various religious pontiffs ( *Āchāryas* ) used to organise small centres for higher education, which co-operated with the private teacher in rendering the valuable service

of keeping the lamp of learning burning in a dark age, when society was often overwhelmed by anarchy, internecine war and foreign rule.

**Private teachers :** Private teachers have all along been the sheet anchor of the educational system. In the prehistoric period, the followers of different Vedas had no doubt formed their own literary organisations called the *Charaṇas*. But *Charaṇas* were merely a loose organisation based upon a fellowship of teachers and students working at different centres but promoting the study of particular Vedic *Sākhā*. Curiously enough these do not seem to have ever made any concerted effort to form organised educational institutions, which would hand down to the next generation the literature of which they were the custodians. This need not cause any surprise. The sacred texts require each Brahmana to devote himself to the cause of teaching in his individual capacity and the injunction was very largely followed. Each learned Brahmana was thus an educational institution by himself. The *Parishads* or councils of famous scholars of the different centres of tribes therefore did not feel it necessary to organise public educational institutions of the modern type, worked with the co-operation and assistance of a number of teachers. Famous capitals and holy places like Taxila and Banaras were centres of a number of famous scholars, but they also imparted education in their individual capacity, and did not as a rule combine to form any colleges. If the number of pupils under any teacher happened to be large, he would either engage an assistant teacher, or assign part of the work to brilliant advanced students.<sup>1</sup> Neither step however would change the individual character of the school. How private teachers organised and imparted education and how they were supported has already been described in

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<sup>1</sup> See *Anabbhirati Jātaka* ( II p. 185 ) and *Mahadhammapala Jātaka* ( IV, p. 447 ) for the appointments of *Pittlocharayyas* and *Jethantenvasikās* respectively.

Chap. III. It may be observed in passing that in ancient Athens also education was for a long time imparted by private teachers and not in public institutions. The first real founder of public schools in Europe is believed to be Charlemagne the Great ( 800 A. D. ); his death however completely frustrated his schemes.<sup>1</sup>

**Rise of organised institutions :** Corporate educational institutions were first evolved in ancient India in connection with Buddhist monasteries. The Buddha had emphasised the vital importance of imparting systematic instructions to novices, who were required to be educated for ten years, not only in spiritual practices, but also in the study of the sacred literature, which required a good grounding in Pali and Sanskrit, logic and metaphysics. When Buddhist monasteries developed into big establishments from the time of Asoka onwards, they naturally developed into centres of education. They were the counterparts of Hindu Gurukulas, where the Guru was the head, not of a family but of a monastery. At first they were intended for monks and nuns only, but later on for the lay population as well; for it was soon discovered that the best way of getting a good supply of novices of the right type and of propagating the religion among the masses was to mould the pliant minds of the young generation by taking up its education. Hindu educational institutions, so far known, are all later than the time of the Nālanda University ( c. 450 A. D. ). It is probable that the starting of organised public institutions for education may have been suggested to Hindus by the transformation of Buddhist monasteries into colleges and Universities. Temple colleges started by Hindus were a natural reaction to the Buddhist monastic Universities. The *Maṭhas* of the Āchāryas (religious teachers and recluses) of the medieval times continued

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<sup>1</sup> Stawnton : *The Great Schools of England*. p. xv.

the same tradition.<sup>1</sup>

**Organisation of Buddhist Universities :** We can get a fairly good idea of the organisation of Buddhist Universities from the accounts handed down to us about Nālandā and Vikramasilā, which were typical of their class. The whole establishment used to be in charge of a chief abbot ( *bhikṣu* ). He was usually elected by the members of the Sangha. Character, scholarship and seniority were the factors usually taken into consideration. In the 9th century; a monk-scholar from near Jalālābad, who was on a pilgrimage to Bihar, was elected to be the principal of the University.<sup>2</sup> This would show that local or provincial jealousies did not influence the election in any way. The abbot-principal used to be assisted by two councils, one academic and the other administrative. The academic council used to regulate admissions, determine courses and assign work to different teachers. In later time when the granting of diplomas was introduced at Vikramasilā, it must have arranged for the holding of examinations as well. It was also in charge of the library and its duties in this connection were onerous. In the pre-press

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1 It is interesting to note that in Europe also from about the 6th to the 11th century A.D. education was centered in monasteries. The causes were somewhat similar. Monks were required to read, so they had to be taught. They must have books and they must in turn teach novices to read and copy manuscripts. Hence arose monastic schools. After the closure of all the pagan schools by Justinian's decree in 529 A.D., monasteries remained the sole schools for teaching. "They offered the only professional training, they were the only Universities of research; they alone served as publishing houses for the multiplication of books ; they were the only libraries for the preservation of learning; they produced the only scholars. It was not till the 11th century that there was any education to speak of outside monastic schools, and not till the 13th century that there occurred marked changes in the character of education given in any institution ; until then all these schools were taught by monks." Monroe, *A Text Book*, pp-255. 261.

2 I. A., XVII, p. 307.

days, libraries were not only store houses of books but also their publishers. They had to take steps to renew their own worn out manuscripts and to meet the constant demand of the outside public for copies of books in their possession. The copying work was to some extent done by the monk teachers and pupils, but clerks also had to be engaged to cope with it. The administrative council was in charge of the general administration and finance. Construction and repairs of buildings, distribution of food, clothes and medicine, allotment of rooms in hostels and assignment of monastic work fell within its purview. Above all, it was in charge of finances and used to take steps to realise the revenues of the estates given as endowments to the institution. This work must have been fairly exacting and complicated in a big University like Nālandā endowed with a hundred or two hundred villages. Steps had to be taken to lease out the fields, to collect the corn due and to store and distribute it properly at the right time. Large staff must have been employed for the work.

**Organisation of Temple Colleges :** South Indian inscriptions give us a vivid picture of the functioning of the temple colleges flourishing there, but throw very little light on their internal organisation. It would appear that they were probably administered by the temple sub-committee of the village council, within whose jurisdiction they fell. It was this sub-committee which administered the estates given as endowments and appointed the teachers of the institution. What subjects were to be taught and how many seats were to be reserved for each of them might have been settled by the temple committee in consultation with the views of the head of the institution. The latter was in charge of the internal administration. He supervised over the boarding houses, allotted seats to students, appointed servants for the

messes and arranged for the supply of provisions. In some places even hospital arrangement was made for the needs of students falling ill. The distribution of the teaching work, the supervision of the library and the maintenance of discipline also fell within the jurisdiction of the head of the Institution.

**School and College Buildings :** We have seen already in Chap. II ( pp. 33-4 ) how only a few educational institutions were located in sylvan solitudes. There is however no information as to what arrangements were made in these institutions for the housing of classes and the lodging of students. In fair weather the classes must have been held under the shades of trees; in the rainy season, some kind of humble tenements must have been found indispensable both for teaching and residence. As far as organised educational institutions like the Buddhist Universities or Hindu temple colleges are concerned, we have definite evidence to show that they used to provide good, spacious and often imposing buildings for their class rooms and hostels. At Nālandā there were eight big lecture halls and as many as three hundred small class rooms. The college buildings were stately and several storeys in height. The university of Vikramāśilā also was provided with several lecture halls by the Pāla emperors. Similar arrangements must have existed at other famous Buddhist centres of education. Military schools intended for aristocratic families were naturally housed in spacious and imposing buildings.<sup>1</sup> Temple colleges were usually located in spacious halls and apartments adjoining the temples, to which they were attached. As far as private teachers were concerned, they usually held their classes in their own houses. This was not difficult for a well-to-do teacher; for the class usually consisted, as we shall soon see, of not more than 10

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<sup>1</sup> *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Vol. IV, part iii, p. 111.

to 15 students. Sanskrit teachers of even moderate reputation could however usually succeed in building a small unostentatious building for their school out of subscriptions collected for the purpose in their own Tehsil or Taluka. Teachers with small houses used to repair to an adjoining temple or garden to carry on their classes. This practice prevailed in Banaras during the mediæval times.

**Lodging and Boarding Arrangements :** Let us now survey the general features of the lodging and boarding arrangements made for students. It has been already shown in Chap. II how the ideal of the Gurukula required the student to stay under his teacher's roof or in a boarding house under his direct supervision. Well-to-do teachers in famous centres of education like Taxila used to arrange for the lodging and boarding of their students in their own houses<sup>1</sup>. It must be remembered in this connection that the number of students reading under one teacher was usually not more than 15 and he could thus arrange for their lodging and boarding. When public educational institutions came into existence they used to invariably arrange for the lodging and boarding of students in hostels specially built for the purpose. Several such hostels existed at Nālandā, Salotgi and Vikramagila<sup>2</sup>. In these hostels, there were common messes run by the authorities through servants appointed for the purpose. Students' rooms were sometimes provided with a stone bench to sleep upon and niches for keeping lamps and other sundry things; this arrangement prevailed at Nālandā, as will become clear by a visit to its excavations. In some places, arrangements were also made to offer free clothing and medicines; some institutions like that at Nalandā in Northern India and Malkapuram in Southern India used to maintain hospitals

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1 Jātaka No 252.

2 See Chap. VI.



for the needs of the sick students.<sup>1</sup> In some places like Salotgi, light also was supplied to student out of special endowments received for the purpose. In Bengal, till quite recent times, teachers of *tols* or Sanskrit schools used to collect subscriptions from well-to-do people in their districts and build small unpretentious mud houses for the residence of students reading under them. It is quite possible that the same practice might have prevailed in ancient times in those localities which were carrying on the work of education in their own humble way, but had not become famous centres of education like Nālandā or Ennāyiram. These boarding houses were under the direct control and management of the teachers under whom the students were working. When however teachers were unable to make such arrangements, students had to shift for themselves. Rich students would often hire their own houses<sup>2</sup>. Poor students would often stay in temple out-houses and subsist by begging.<sup>3</sup>

**Payment of Fees : No Stipulation :**—Stipulation for fees was vehemently condemned in ancient India. No student could be refused admission even by a private teacher simply because he was too poor to pay any fees. A teacher guilty of this misdemeanour was declared to be unfit to officiate at religious ceremonies and was held to obloquy as a mere trafficker in learning.<sup>4</sup> It was held that the cause of education was a sacred one ; every teacher qualified to teach must teach as a matter of duty. The relations between the teacher

1 S. I. E. R for 1917. pp. 122-4,

2 Jātaka No. 456

3 This arrangement prevailed in Vijayanagara.

4 यस्यागमः कैवलजीविकायै तं ज्ञानपण्यं वणिजं वदन्ति ।

{ *Mālavikāgnimitra*, 1. 17.

यत्र विद्यामासाद्य अस्मिल्लोके तथा सह जीवेन्न सा तस्य फलप्रदा

and the student should be based upon mutual affection and regard, and not on any mercenary consideration.<sup>1</sup> There is ample evidence to show that this theory was acted upon in all public educational institutions in ancient India. Evidence of indisputable character shows that the Buddhist Universities, temple colleges, Agrahara institutions, and Mathas were all imparting free education to their students. When they used to receive sufficient endowments, they would also arrange to provide free boarding, lodging, clothing, and medicine to the students admitted by them. Education, therefore, was free in a much wider sense in ancient India than is ever dreamt possible in modern times.

**Private Teachers and Fees :** It is necessary to note that what has been condemned by the sacred texts is a *stipulation* for the payment of fees as a *condition precedent* to admission; they have no objection to teachers accepting voluntary gifts from the guardians of students reading under them. Just as the teacher was exhorted to remember that teaching was his sacred duty, the guardian also was asked to note that no object in the universe, howsoever precious it might be, can be regarded as an adequate fee for even that humble teacher, who teaches a single letter of

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(Continued from the last page)

भवेत् । *Vishnu*, 30, 39.

The *Saura Purana*, X—42, condemns such a teacher to hell. Such condemnation, however, may suggest that a small minority of teachers may have been following the objectionable practice.

1 It is interesting to note that there existed a similar prejudice against the charging of fees in ancient Greece for a long time. Neither Socrates nor Plato charged any fees. It was the Sophists who first introduced the custom of offering instructions to any person in any subject he chose, if he offered sufficient remuneration. The practice was despised by the public opinion in the in the beginning but was soon adopted by all educational institutions before the 3rd century B. C. Spencippus, the successor of Plato at the Academy, charged fee from his students. *Monroe, A Text-book*, p. 112,

the alphabet.<sup>1</sup> Smṛitis resort to this hyperbolic strain because they were anxious that the teacher, who was prevented from charging regular fees, should be in a position to get an adequate living. The exhortation to the guardians was not without its effect. For we find that though in theory the teacher's honorarium ( *gurudakṣhiṇī* ) became payable only at the end of education,<sup>2</sup> rich guardians used to pay the whole of it in advance according to their ability.<sup>3</sup> Guardians of ordinary means must have found this procedure impracticable and paid the fee by easy instalments, though we have so far got no evidence of this practice prevailing. None who could afford, was permitted by the public opinion to evade payment. It was regarded as a very great disgrace that one should not pay one's teacher though properly instructed, when one had the ability to pay. When Nāgasena, being a monk, naturally expressed his unwillingness to accept the rich and luxurious gifts of his royal pupil, Menander, the latter begged him to change his mind in order to save him from the scandal getting abroad that though properly instructed, he gave nothing in acknowledgment to his teacher ( *Mil. paṇ.*, I, pp. 134-5 ). Stu-

1. Cf. एकमप्यक्षरं यस्तु गुरुः शिष्ये निवेदयेत् ।

पृथिव्यां नास्ति तद् द्रव्यं यद्वाञ्छणी भवेत् ॥

Laghu-hārīta in Par. Mad., I, ii, p. 53.

It is interesting to note that Luther's view was similar. 'I tell you a teacher, who faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never receive an adequate reward, and no money is sufficient to pay the debt you owe him.' Monroe, *A Text-Book*, p. 414.

2. Yājñavalkya repeatedly refused the offer of a handsome fee from Janaka on the ground that he had not finished all what he had to teach. *Br. Up.* IV. 1.

3. Jātakas show that rich persons like merchants and princes used to send the whole amount of school fee in advance when they used to send their sons to Taxila. See Jātakas Nos. 55, 61, 445, 447, 522 etc. Bhīṣma also had paid Droṇa his honorarium in advance before he had started the education of Kaurava princes, *Mbh.* 1. 142. 1. The same was done by the father of Nāgasena, the preceptor of Menander. *Milindapaṇha*, Vol. I, 17.

dents whose guardians were really too poor to pay any honorarium were expected to help the teacher in his household work and pay him some honorarium at the end of the course by collecting subscriptions for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> We often come across such students in Jātakas. To refuse their request for subscription was regarded as highly disgraceful.<sup>2</sup>

**Payment of Fees : a Resume :** There was no fixed scale of monthly or sessional fees prescribed in ancient India. It was the duty of Brahmanas, who were the custodians of ancient culture and learning, to teach all qualified students free of any charge. If a student was poor, the teacher could not refuse him admission ; he had to teach him in return for personal service and in expectation of some lump sum to be received later, when he had finished his education and was in a position to collect subscription for the purpose. As far as well-to-do persons were concerned, they were expected to pay the maximum they could do to the teacher. Government also was expected to enable the teachers to impart free education by giving them land grants and pensions. It was also expected to give rich endowments to public institutions in order to enable them to offer not only free instruction but also free boarding and lodging. The available evidence shows that this arrangement fostered a proper sense of responsibility and worked on the whole quite satisfactorily.

1. E. G. पञ्चा धम्मेण भिक्खं चरित्वा आचारियं धनं आहरिस्सामि  
No. 478.

2. Cf. King Raghu's observation to Kaut-a, who had come to him hoping to get the amount of his teacher's fee—

गुर्वर्थमर्थी श्रुतपारदृश्वा रघोः सकाशादनवाप्य कामम् ।

गतो वदान्यान्तरमित्ययं मे माभूत्परीवादनवावतारः ॥ V. 24

King Uttanka gave his wife's earrings to a graduate, who was asked by the teacher to procure them as his fee. The latter's wife was desirous to wear them.

**Admission Procedure :** In ancient Indian educational system there were no examinations, diplomas and migration certificates ; every student, therefore, who sought admission to a higher course, had to undergo a severe test to prove that he was fit for it. The duty to provide free education that was imposed upon teachers and institutions must also have naturally resulted in making the admission test a stiff one. The test was partly moral and partly intellectual. Morally disqualified students were summarily rejected ( *Nirukta*, II. 4 ). In ordinary schools dullards were given a trial and advised discontinuance of studies, when it was discovered that they could not improve. In famous centres like Nālandā, where the rush was great, the admission test was very stiff ; only two or three out of ten could succeed in getting admission.<sup>1</sup> Both at Nālandā and Vikramaśilī, there were special professors appointed to the task of regulating admission by testing the calibre, capacity and sincerity of the applicants for admission.<sup>2</sup> Probably similar arrangements existed also in other institutions of higher education. Private teachers would themselves test the capacity of students seeking admission to their schools. At the beginning of Vedic and professional education, some religious rituals also were performed, which will be described in Appendices I, B, E and F.

**The Size of the Class :** The income of the private teacher varied with the number of his students, and we sometimes come across rituals prescribed for getting more students. But the actual number of students reading under one teacher does not seem to have been large. The Jātakas no doubt very often state that the 'world-renowned' teachers of Taxila used

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1. Watters, II, p. 216; Beal, II, 170-1.

2. These scholars bore the rather curious title of *Dvārapālas* or door-keepers. See Bose, *Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities* pp. 47, 60.

to have 500 students reading under them; but this statement seems to be an exaggeration, suggested by the traditional number of disciples usually associated with the Buddha. For all available evidence shows that the strength of a class under one teacher was usually about 15. Nālandā used to have about a thousand teachers for its student population of not more than nine thousand. In the 11th century in the Vedic college at Ennāyiram, each teacher had only about 20 students under his charge.<sup>1</sup> At Banaras during the 17th century sometimes only four and usually about 12 to 15 students used to work under one teacher<sup>2</sup>. In the 19th century the number of students under one teacher in Sanskrit schools at Nadia varied from 10 to 20<sup>3</sup>. It therefore seems to be almost certain that the Jātaka statement about the teachers at Taxila having 500 students each is an exaggeration. The normal strength of a class was never more than 20.

**School Hours :** Curiously enough there is very little information available about the school hours. Smṛitis are altogether silent upon the point. We should however note that in ancient time press, paper and cheap books were absent; so home work or home reading was practically impossible. All the work had to be done under the guidance of the teacher or the monitor. Literature often describes the early morning time as resounding with the sound of the recitation of students<sup>4</sup>. So there is no doubt that there was a morning session, probably starting at about 7 A. M., when the daily religious duties were over. The morning session continued till about 11

1. S. I. E. R., 1918, p. 145

2. Bernier, p. 145.

3. Nadia Gazetteer, p. 182.

4. शुश्राव ब्रह्मवोषान् स विरात्रे ब्रह्मरक्षसाम् । Rāmāyaṇa,  
बटुपटलसमारब्धस्वाध्यायाध्ययनध्वान्प्रबुद्धासु । Vāsavadatta

A. M., when both the students and the teachers had to break off for their religious duties and meals. The noon meal was followed by a short rest and the school reassembled at about 2 P. M. and worked for three or four hours. The school period was spent partly in what may be called homework and partly in learning new lessons. The former consisted of committing to memory the text expounded earlier with the help of one or two copies of the book existing in the school or under the direction of a senior monitor, who was well versed in it. The memorising and revision work was usually done in the morning, and new lessons were taught in the afternoon. Such at any rate was the tradition in the Sanskrit schools of Bengal and Bihar. We must remember in this connection that Brahmana teachers were busy in the morning in performing their own religious duties or officiating at religious functions and ceremonies, to which they were often invited. The noon session therefore must have been usually devoted to teach new lessons. It is however quite possible that there may have been no hard and fast rules in this connection. If the teachers were free, the morning session may also have been devoted to new lessons. In organised colleges which engaged full time teachers, this may have been generally the case.

**No One Time School :** It must have been noticed that there was no one time school in ancient India. One time school, either in the morning or in the afternoon, would not have suited the religious habits of the age, which necessitated the performance of religious duties both in the morning and the noon. It has to be noted that most of the teachers of higher education belonged to the priestly class. Students usually lived with their teachers or very near their houses or in small villages; so attendance at the school two times a day did not cause any physical inconvenience similar

to what is felt by the children living in big cities and attending schools situated far off. Nor was it necessary to keep either morning or noon free to students for their home work ; for hardly any home-work was possible. Even the richest student in ancient times could not afford to have about half the number of books and exercises, which the poorest student is compelled to procure in the modern High School.

**Night Classes :** Poor students who could not pay any honorarium to the teacher had to do a good deal of the household work for him. They naturally could not be present throughout school hours during the day. Teachers used to hold night classes for their convenience. There is definite evidence to show that this practice prevailed at Taxila<sup>1</sup> ; probably it obtained in other places also. In normal cases however classes were not held at night. Night time was however often used for general religious discourses<sup>2</sup>.

**College Session : Pre-historic Period :** The Upā-karma and Utsarjana rituals show that the college session could not have lasted for more than five or six months<sup>3</sup>. It began sometime in August and ended sometime in February. Such was the case in prehistoric times when only Vedic hymns formed the main subject of study. When however the sacred literature became more extensive and new branches of learning were developed like grammar, philology, astronomy, philosophy and sacred law ( Dharmaśāstra ), the short session of six months was found to be inadequate and studies began to be prosecuted throughout the year.

**College Session : Later Times :** There is ample

1. धम्मन्तेवासिका आचारियस्स कम्मं कत्वा रत्ति रिप्पमुग्गहंति ।

आचारियभागदायका गेहे जेट्ठु पुता विव हुत्वा सिग्गमेव उग्गहंति ।

Jātaka N. 252.

2. अनध्यायो निशायामन्यत्र धर्मोपदेशात् शिष्येभ्यः ।

A. D. S. 32. 12.

3. Appendix I, section O.



evidence to show that in later times, though the Utsarjana ceremony, which marked the suspension of the Vedic studies, was performed in February, the college work went on uninterrupted. Manu, for instance, states that in spite of the Utsarjana ceremony, the study of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas should be continued throughout the year ( IV. 98 ). College terms followed by fairly long vacations, with which we are now familiar, seem to have been altogether unknown in ancient India since about 7th century B. C. Transport difficulties were immense and students from Rājagriha (near Patna) and Banāras going to distant places like Taxila used to return home only when the whole course was over<sup>1</sup> ( Jā. No. 252 ). They therefore continued their education throughout the year and had no long vacation like those we have at present. The present day custodians of Sanskrit learning are unaware of any tradition about long vacations obtaining in the past. If a student had some urgent work, he could take leave and go home to attend to it. Those whose homes were very near might have occasionally gone home on some of the usual holidays. But the entire teaching work does not seem to have been suspended for any part of the year. Work also was not much disturbed by different students going home at different times ; for generally speaking each student was taught separately.

**The List of Holidays :** We come across a systematic list of holidays only in post-Vedic literature<sup>2</sup>. But many of these go back to very early times. Regular holidays were four in the month at an interval of a week, the new and full moon days and the eighth day of each

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1. The rule in the *Arthśāstra* (II.4) laying down that the wife of a Brahmana student should wait ten or twelve years before re-marrying or having recourse to Niyoga also suggests that there used to exist no long vacations during which married students could go home and stay for sometime with their families.

2. G. D. S. II, 7, B. Dh. S. I, 11. *Manu*, IV. 100 ff

fortnight. Sympathetic interest with the inhabitants of the locality was also responsible for the stopping of the work sometimes, when the peace of the settlement was disturbed by an invasion or by incursions of robbers or cattle-lifters, or when the king or a Brahmana of the village had met with an accident or died. Arrival of distinguished guests led to the suspension of studies ; for a good deal of the time and energy of both the teachers and the students had to be devoted to make the guests comfortable.

**Holidays for bad Weather, etc. :—**Abnormal weather conditions giving rise to untimely clouds, thunder, heavy showers, frost, dust-storms etc. were also regarded as sufficient causes to suspend studies. Holidays for these causes seem to go back to hoary antiquity, when students and teachers lived in humble cottages and were engaged in agricultural pursuits. It must be further remembered that the teaching and learning of the Vedic hymns in the manner in which it is done traditionally was physically impossible when a storm or lightning was thundering abroad. In later times when teachers were well-to-do men living in towns and villages and not directly concerned with active agricultural pursuits, it is doubtful if studies used to be suspended when there was a dust-storm or frost. When the howling of jackals, crying of wolfs, screeching of owls, braying of donkeys or barking of dogs was heard, teaching was temporarily stopped, partly on account of superstitious beliefs and partly due to the notion that the Vedic study was so sacred an affair that it could be prosecuted only under ideally pure circumstances. It was apprehended that gods would become angry if the sanctity of the Vedas was defiled by their being studied on such occasions.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. छिद्राप्याहुर्द्विजातीनामनध्यायान्मनीषिणः ।

छिद्रेभ्यः स्रवति ब्रह्म ब्राह्मणेन यदर्जितम् ॥

**Curtailment of Holidays :** In course of time most of the holidays mentioned in the last paragraph were abolished. Curriculum was getting heavier and some reasons had to be found for departing from the old tradition. Some authorities, therefore, started the theory that prohibition of studies under abnormal weather conditions referred only to loud recitations ; silent reading was not intended to be interdicted<sup>1</sup>. Others held that non-Vedic work could be studied on the official holidays<sup>2</sup>. It would appear that in later times discretion was given to different institutions as to what holidays should be permitted by them to their students. Holidays allowed to the youngsters were to be more numerous than those to be allowed to advanced students<sup>3</sup>. This was certainly a very sound educational principle. In the case of serious students, apart from the four monthly holidays, studies seem to have been suspended since early times only when they themselves or the place they were studying was impure<sup>4</sup>.

**Organisation of Courses :** The modern reader will be surprised to learn that in ancient India there were no central bodies like the senates or boards of studies to prescribe a clear cut course of a definite duration

( Continued from the last page )

आयुः प्रजां पशून्मेधां कृन्तामि सुकृतं च यत् ।

अनध्यायेष्वभ्यसतः ब्रह्म व्याहरतस्तथा ॥

Quoted by Aṣṭārarka on *Yāj.* I, 142-151.

1. *B. Dh. S.*, I. 11, 40 ; *मनसा चानध्याये* । *A. D. S. I.* 3. 11 24.

2. *Manu* II. 105., cf. also; *Kūrmapurāṇa*;

नानध्यायोस्ति चांगेषु नेतिहासपुराणयोः ।

न धर्मशास्त्रेष्वन्येषु पर्वाण्येतानि वर्जयेत् ॥

3. तत्र सर्वत्र प्राज्ञाध्येतृविषयेण गुरुलघुकालानां व्यवस्था ज्ञेया ।

*V. M. S.*, p. 536.

4. *T. A.*, II. 15, *Manu*, IV. 127.

in different subjects. This was a natural consequence of the circumstance that education was mostly imparted by private teachers; they did not belong to any institution, nor were they controlled by any government. There was also another reason for this phenomenon. Ancient Indians regarded knowledge as unlimited and no period that one could spend for its acquisition was regarded as adequate for the purpose<sup>1</sup>. The duration and contents of the course were therefore largely determined by the will, capacity and convenience of the student. Some students who wanted to get an all-round mastery used to read for as many as 25 or 30 years. Others who were home-sick or were content with a superficial knowledge, used to return home in six or even three years. Intelligent students, who could master the course in a shorter time, were allowed to return as soon as their studies were over.

**Normal Duration of the Course :** The course of higher education usually began with Upanayana at about the age of ten and extended over about 12 years. The tradition is quite definite about the Vedic course extending over that period. This period was necessary for the study of one Veda along with its subsidiary branches. The duration of the courses of non-Vedic studies like philology, logic, philosophy, poetics, Dharmaśāstra, etc. is not definitely known. The students of these subjects had to study a few

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1. There is an interesting parable in this connection in Tai, Br., III. 10. 11. 3. A Brahmana named Bhāradvāja spent three successive lives in attempting to master all the Vedas. On learning he proposed to spend his fourth life also for the same purpose. Indra appeared before him, showed him three hillocks of corn, and taking a handful from each, told him that the three Vedas were infinite and what he had learnt of them in three lives bore the same proportion to what remained to be mastered as his three handfuls bore to the hills of corn lying in front.

Sanskrit literature is full of sayings to the effect that knowledge is infinite and cannot be mastered in one's life.---

अनन्तपारं खलु शब्दशास्त्रं स्वल्पं तथायुर्विपुलाश्च विद्मः ।

Vedic hymns, necessary for their religious duties and a good deal of grammar in order to get the facility for understanding works in advanced Sanskrit prescribed for their courses. The full grammar course extended over 10 years in the 7th century A.D.; but the students of poetics, philosophy or sacred law (Dharmaśāstra), might have finished their grammar course in five or six years and devoted about ten years for getting a mastery in the subject of their choice. A person who wanted to be regarded as cultured and well educated had thus to spend about 15 or 16 years for his education subsequent to the time of his Upanayana at about the age of eight or nine<sup>1</sup>. Usually he could finish his education and become an expert in one particular branch at about the age of 24, which was regarded as the ideal age for marriage. It is interesting to note that in medieval Europe also, the complete course of Latin education covered a period of about 15 years (Raymond, *Principles*, p. 193).

Sometimes students went to experts for shorter periods of six months or a year and were called *māsika* or *śāmvatsarika*.

**Longer Course for special Experts :** Those however who wanted to become special experts<sup>2</sup> or get the mastery of several Vedas or wanted to specialise in more than one branch of knowledge had to devote a much longer period for their studies. They had to spend another 12 years for each Veda and their studentship extended over 48 years<sup>3</sup>. Megasthenes<sup>4</sup> and Colebrooke<sup>5</sup> refer to such students, when they both refer to scholars prosecuting their studies even at the age of 37. Society however did not

1. I-tsing, pp. 170-77

2. Twenty years were required for mastering the Krishna Yajurveda and the enormous number of sacrifices and rituals connected with it. *Education Commission Report, Madras Prov. Committee 1882*. P. 6.

3. Kātyāyana describes them as *Ashtachalvarīṣins*.

4. Fragment No. 41

5. *Nadu Gazetteer* p. 182.

approve of the devotion of so great a part of life to the cause of studies, if the person eventually intended to marry. One authority states that a person ought to be married in the prime of the life ; to postpone marriage to the age of 35 or 40 would be a folly<sup>1</sup>. Specialisation had come into field early ; it was not necessary for a person to master several Vedas or several branches of knowledge. It was feared that if this was indiscriminately encouraged, some students would be tempted to prolong their education indefinitely especially since society used to provide them with free boarding and lodging<sup>2</sup>. The case of teachers and professors was different ; they had already become earning and useful members of society. They were expected to be life-long students and acquire efficiency in several branches.

**Travel at the End of Education :** There is some evidence to show that in some cases education was completed by extensive travelling done at the end of the course. We are informed that the idea underlying this custom was to acquaint the student with the manners of the world in general and the conventions prevailing in the profession that he had specialised in particular<sup>3</sup>. We however do not know how far this custom was a common one in ancient India.

1. Cf कृष्णकेशो ह्यग्नोनादधीतेति श्रुतेः । *Bau. Dh. S.*, I, 2, 31.

Śabara thinks that only eunuchs can contemplate the postponement of marriage to the age of 48.

Cf. अमुं स्त्वं प्रच्छादयन्तश्चाष्टाचत्वारिंशद्वर्षाणि ब्रह्मचर्यं चरितवन्तः।

On P. M., 1, 3,

2. Cf. विना कुटुंबभरणात्तपोविद्यार्थिनः सदा ।

द्वीपे निवासितव्यास्ते बद्धा दुर्गोदरेऽथवा ॥ *Śukra*, IV. 1. 106:

3. सब्सिप्पानि उग्राहीत्वा सब्समयसिप्पं च सिक्खिसाम देसचरितं च जानिस्साम इति गामनिगमादिषु चरंता वाराणसीं पात्वा ।

**Life-long Studenthood :** Actuated by spiritual motives, some persons in ancient India used to observe life-long celibacy and devote their time entirely to religion and education<sup>1</sup>. They were known as Naishṭhika Brahmachāris. Their primary motive was spiritual salvation, but it was to be achieved not by penance or meditation, but by the dedication of a life of chastity to the cause of the sacred lore. Unmoved by praise or reproach, they carried on their work without mixing much with mundane world and its affairs. Their sole concern was a thorough acquisition of knowledge. 'Forgetting fatigue' says Yuan Chwang, 'they expatiate in arts and sciences; seeking for wisdom, they count not 1000 *li* (roughly equal to 200 miles) as a long journey. Though their family may be in affluent circumstances, such men make up their minds to be like vagrants and get their food by begging, as they go about. With them there is honour in knowing the truth and there is no disgrace in being destitute' ( I. 160-1 ). Smṛitis require a Naishṭhika Brahmachāri to serve his teacher throughout his life; in actual practice however they used to establish new centres of education after some time. Famous teachers like Kaṇva and Divākara-sena (of the *Harshacharita*) were such Naishṭhika Brahmachāris. This ideal of Naishṭhika Brahmacharya, which is peculiar to India, enabled her to make striking progress in learning and philosophy.

### EDUCATIONAL FINANCE.

**Introduction :** We have seen already that the item of students' fees was a minor one in the income of the

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1. Some of the medieval writers, who did not know the real object of Naishṭhika Brahmacharya, have recommended it to dumb, deaf and impotent persons, who could not marry पंग्वादीनामनं-  
शत्वादसामर्थ्याच्च शास्त्रतः नियतं नैष्ठिकत्वं स्यात्कर्मस्वनधिकारतः ॥

V. M. S. p. 551.

Aparārka p. 72, Maḍana p. 111 and Mādhava 1, 2, p. 5 have however pointed out how this view is wrong.

private teacher and did not figure at all in the budgets of public colleges and universities. The question therefore naturally arises as to how education was being financed in ancient India. Society, which had frowned upon the practice of charging regular fees as a mercenary and unworthy procedure, used to succeed in getting ample support for the cause of education by appealing to the religious and charitable instincts of the public. Vidyādāna or a gift in the cause of education was pronounced to be the best of gifts, possessing a higher religious efficacy than even the gift of land (*bhūmidāna*)<sup>1</sup>. Religion had a great hold over the public mind in ancient times and this spiritual exaltation of Vidyādāna secured so wide and ample a response to the cause of education, both from the public and the government, that it used to become possible to impart free education at least to all poor students, wishing to derive its benefits.

#### Help by Society : the Quota of ordinary Men :

There is ample evidence to show that society was always anxious to help the cause of education in a variety of ways. Even the poorest family was required to support the cause of education by giving a morsel of food to the poor and hungry student coming to beg food at the door at midday; to turn away such a student was pronounced to be the gravest of sins<sup>2</sup>. Men of ordinary means used to support the cause of education in a variety of ways. They used to offer presents only to learned Brahmanas on the occasion of Śraddha, these presents were fairly

<sup>1</sup> सहस्रसंमिता धेनुरनङ्गवान्दशधेनवः । दशानुङ्कुत्समं यानं दशयानसमं हयः ॥ दश वाजिसमा कन्या भूमिदानं च तत्समम् । भूमिदानात्परं नास्ति विद्यादानं ततोऽधिकम् । Bṛihaspati quoted in SCS, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> स्त्रीणां प्रत्याचक्षाणां समाहितो ब्रह्मचारी इष्टं दत्तं हुतं प्रजां यश्च ब्रह्मवर्चसमन्नाद्यं वृक्ते । AP. Dh. S. 1, 3, 24-26 G. Br., 2. 5-7 has a similar warning.



numerous and frequent, for the Śrāddha was performed in ancient times once in a month and not once in a year, as is the case now. On the occasion of religious feasts as large a number of students and teachers as possible was invited: the citizens of Taxila, for instance, were particular to follow this practice (Jātaka No. 498). On auspicious occasions like Upanayana and marriage, families used to give donations in cash or kind to teachers and educational institutions<sup>1</sup>.

**The Quota of Richer Citizens:** Rich persons used to help the cause of education in more substantial ways. They would often engage the services of a teacher for their children and permit the villagers also to send their wards to study under him. Sometimes they used to take the lion's share in meeting the expenses of the local school. They used to offer substantial help to graduates collecting subscription for paying honorarium to their teachers. Very often they used to defray the expenses of copying books with a view to present them to scholars or schools. In an age in which there existed neither press nor paper, gifts of books were very badly needed<sup>2</sup>. Very rich persons sometimes used to found free feeding houses for the poor in general and the students in particular<sup>3</sup>; sometimes they would construct college

1. The citizens of Salotgi, for instance, used to follow this practice; see *E. I.* IV, p. 60.

2. These have been recommended by Purāṇas; cf. शास्त्रे यस्मा-  
ज्जगत्सर्वं संश्रितं शुभाशुभम् । तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रयत्नेन दातव्यं शुभकर्मणा ॥  
Quoted by Aparārka on *Yāj.* I 212. Both Nālandā and Valabhi used to get grants for books; see Chap. VI.

3. These, for instance, existed at Kolagalli, Managoli, Nilgund, Nesarge, Bagewadi, Belgamve, Dambal, Gadag and Behati in Karnataka and at Kharepatan in Konkan during 1000-1400 A. D. See *I. M. P.*, Bellary No. 82; *E. I.* V, p. 22; *Ibid.*, III p. 208; J. B. B. R. A. S., X, p. 266; *I. A.*, VII, p. 307; *Ibid.*, V, P. 49; *Ibid.*, X, p. 188; *Ibid.* I. p. 30. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 274, *E. I.* IV, p. 355 respectively.

buildings either as a matter of charity<sup>1</sup> or in commemoration of some departed relation<sup>2</sup>. Others would often endow chairs<sup>3</sup>, or make grants of land to meet some recurring expenses. This was a combination of Vidyādāna and Bhumidāna, and was very Popular<sup>4</sup>. Those who were extremely rich would often found and endow schools and colleges<sup>5</sup>: Sometimes village communities<sup>6</sup> and trade guilds<sup>7</sup> also would organise and finance educational institutions from their own resources.

**The Example of the Punjab :** That the tradition to help the cause of education was deep-rooted in society would become quite clear from what we know about the state of the Punjab on the eve of the British conquest. Dr. Leitner, its first Educational Commissioner, observes<sup>8</sup>, "Respect for learning has always been the

1. Nārāyaṇa, a Rāshṭrakūṭa minister, had done this in 945 A. D. for the college at Salotgi, E. I., IV. P. 60,

2. For instance a Brahmana landlord at Kudarkot had erected a building for a Vedic school in memory of his son killed in war, E. I., I. p. 60.

3. These were known as *Adhyayanavrittis* and *Vedavrittis* and their holders were also required to recite and expound Vedas and Purāṇas for the benefit of the public. At a single village named Kuttalam in Trichinopoly district sixteen endowments were made for this purpose within the short interval of 150 years during the Vijayanagara rule ; see S. I. E. R., for 1917, nos. 481 and 487 of 1917.

4. A Local magnate had given a gift of 200 *nivartanas* of land to the college at Salotgi. E. I., IV. b. 60. See also I. A., XII. p. 258 and XIII, p. 94 for similar gifts given at Soratur and Dharwar,

5. Chaṅgadeva, for instance, a grandson of Bhaskarāchārya, the famous astronomer, had founded a college at Patau, see E. I. I. p. 31, Perumal, a Hoysal minister, had founded a college at Metuggi in Karnatak in 1290 A. D. where Vedas, Sāstras, Canarese and Marathi were taught ; see E. C. III. Tiru-Narspur, No. 27.

6. The Sanskrit college at Ennayiram was endowed by the local village community : S. I. E. R., 1918, p. 145, the village community at Belur had made a grant of land for meeting part of the expenses of a local institution ; see I. A., XVII, p. 273.

7. A guild at Dambal in Dharwar district was maintaining a Sanskrit college in the 12th century ; I. A. VIII, p. 185.

8. *A History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab*, p. 1 ; Indian Education Commission. 1882.

redeeming feature of the East. To this the Punjab formed no exception. Torn by invasions and civil war, it ever preserved and added to educational institutions. The most unscrupulous chief, the avaricious money-lender and even the free-booter vied with the small money-lender in making peace with his conscience by founding schools and rewarding the learned. There was not a mosque, a temple or a Dharmashālā that had not a school attached to it, to which the youths flocked chiefly for religious education. There were few wealthy men who did not entertain a Maulavi, a Pandit or a Guru to teach their sons, and along with them, the sons of their friends and dependents. There were hundreds of religious men who gratuitously taught their coreligionists, and sometimes all comers, for the sake of God. There was not a single villager who did not take pride in devoting a portion of his produce to a respected teacher." For obvious reasons the reverence for education in other parts of India in the ancient period could not have been less sincere and deep than it was in the Punjab at the advent of the British rule.

**Government's Contribution : Direct Form :** Let us now see how the governments used to help the cause of education in ancient India. Governments usually reflect the views of society and cannot much lag behind it in helping the causes cherished by it. This happened in ancient India also. There is no Smṛiti which does not recognise patronage of education as one of the most important duties of kings;<sup>1</sup> and as a general rule, rulers in ancient times used to vie with one another in discharg-

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1. See *Manu*, VII, 82, *Yāj.* I, 130, *Śukra*, I 369, *Arthasāstra*, II, 1 and 20. Bhīṣma pointedly draws the attention of Dharma to this duty, see *Mbh.* XIII, chaps. 59 and 60.

Though extending patronage, kings were not to assume a patronising attitude to learned men. King Raghu treats Kautsa very courteously, Dushyanta leaves behind his army when approaching the hermitage of Kaṇva.

ing it. This they did both directly and indirectly. Sometimes they used to found or endow colleges, as was, for instance, done by the Guptas at Nālandā. On auspicious occasions like coronation they used to invite learned Brahmanas and found a colony of theirs, endowing villages to meet the expenses of the new settlers. This was tantamount to founding a new college, for these Brahmana colonies used to develop into famous centres of education. Governments used also to grant lands or pensions to most of the learned Brahmanas that used to come to their courts. Liberality of kings like Kanishka, Chandragupta II, Harsha and Bhoja is well known to history and tradition<sup>1</sup>. Scores of copper-plate grants published so far show that kings were generally in the habit of giving land grants to learned and pious Brahmanas. These latter in their turn used to offer free tuition and thus help the cause of education. But for royal patronage poets and authors like Kālidāsa, Bāṇa, Bhavabhūti, Vākpati, Rājasekhara and Śrīharsha could not have done as

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Some of the kings, who had extended patronage to famous scholars, may be mentioned here :—

1. Aśvaghoṣa and Charāka were the proteges of Kanishka. The Sātavāhanas of the Deccan were famous for their patronage of scholarship. Numerous are the stories still current of the liberality of Chandragupta Vikramāditya to men of letters. His successors Kumāragupta, Tardagaṇa, Narasimhagupta and Budhagupta endowed a number of villages to Nālandā University. Emperor Harsha was not only a patron of letters, but himself a good poet and dramatist. Bhavabhūti and Vākpati belonged to the entourage of king Yaśovarman of Kanauj. King Mahendrapāl and Mahipāla of the same city were the patrons of the famous dramatist Rājasekhara. Kings Munia, Sindhurāja and Bhoja of the Paramāra dynasty are subjects of numerous anecdotes illustrative of their love of learning. The last mentioned one was himself a great author. Vikramāditya VI of the Chālukya dynasty invited poet Bilhana to his court from Kashmir and extended his patronage to Vijnāneśvara, whose *Mitāksharā* is still regarded as authoritative in law courts. Umāpati deva, Dhoi, Govardhana and Jayadeva were living at the court of king Lakshmaṇasena of Bengal, Hemachandra at the court of king Kumārāpāla of Gujarat and Śrīharsha, the author of *Naishadhacharita* at the court of kings Vijayachandra and Jayachandra of Kanauj.

much literary work as they did. The tradition of giving direct monetary help to learned Brahmanas promoting the cause of education continued down to the times of the Peshwas in the 19th century. Bajirao II, the last of the Peshwas, used to spend 5,00,000 of rupees in giving charity to learned Brahmanas. 'But' says Elphinstone, 'the Dakṣiṇā formed only a small portion of his largesses to Brahmanas and the number of persons devoted to Hindu learning and religion who were supported by him exceeded what would be readily supposed.'<sup>1</sup>

**Government Help in indirect Forms :** Governments used to help the cause of education in many indirect ways also. They used to offer scholarships to students to enable them to complete their education.<sup>2</sup> Often they used to hold literary tournaments and offer rich rewards to successful scholars.<sup>3</sup> In making appointments they used to show preference to men of learning ; it is well known that many of the officers of the Guptas were good poets or students of politics.<sup>4</sup> Of course it was not possible for governments to absorb all graduates in their service ; those who could not be employed in administrative posts to get some

1. Elphinstone's minute quoted at p. 5 of the *Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee, Education Commission, 1882.*

2. सर्वविद्याकलाभ्यासे शिक्षयेद्भृतिपोषितान् ।

समाप्तविद्यं तं दृष्ट्वा तत्कार्ये तं नियोजयेत् ॥ *Śukra*, I. 368

Some of the Taxila students were state scholars ; J. No. 522

3. Kings Janaka of Mithilā and Ajātaśatru of Banaras are, for instance, known to have done this ; *Br. Up.* II 1. 1, Vikramāditya and Harsha are also famous for inviting learned men for literary affrays.

4. Harishena, the author of the Allahabad *prastāvi* was holding the post of a judge; Sāba, a minister of Chandragupta II, was a poet and an expert in Nītiśāstra. See Fleet. *Gupta Inscriptions*, 1 and 5.

monetary help to enable them to start their lives<sup>1</sup>. Failure to help liberally a student, collecting money to pay his teacher's honorarium was regarded as the greatest slur on a king's reputation.<sup>2</sup> Further indirect help to the cause of education was given by the state by exempting students and learned but poor Brahmanas from taxation.<sup>3</sup> The treasure trove laws were so framed as to help the cause of learning.<sup>4</sup> The law of limitation was relaxed in favour of the student engaged in prosecuting studies at a college ( Gurukula ).<sup>5</sup>

### Government Help without Government Control :

A recent Soviet writer on education has averred that schools and colleges can never be free from political control as long as the state exists.<sup>6</sup> His statement appears to be true when we cast a glance at the educational organisations in modern times : for states are at present generally anxious to control educational institutions and curricula as soon as they proceed

1. This practice, for instance, prevailed at the court of Valabhi in the 7th century A. D ; see I-tsing, p. 177-8.

2. Cf. Raghu's remark to Kautsa when he wanted to go away, unsuccessful in his mission to get the amount of *Gurudakshinā* :—

गुर्वर्थमर्थी श्रुतपारदृश्वो रघोः सकाशादनवाप्य कामम् ।

गतो वदान्यान्तरमित्ययं मे मा भूत्परीवादनवावतारः ॥ V. 24

3. Cf :—अकरः श्रोत्रियः । . . . ये च विद्यार्थिनः सन्ति । *Ā.D.S.* II. 10. 26. 14-17, see also *V. Dh. S.*, XIII. 15

4. If a king found a treasure trove he was required to give half of it to learned Brahmanas ; if the latter found it, they could retain the whole. Others had to refund 16 per cent to the state. *Manu*, VIII. 35-9; *Yāj.* II. 34-5

5. Cf :—ब्रह्मचारी चरेत्कश्चिद्व्रतं षट्त्रिंशदाब्दिकम् ।

समावृत्तो व्रती कुर्याद्धनस्यान्वेषणं ततः ।

पञ्चाशदाब्दिको भोगस्तद्धनस्यापहारकः ॥

Nārada in *SCS*, quoted at *S. B. E.*, 33. pp. 243-4.

6. Pinkewitch, *New Education in Soviet Russia*.

to give government grants. In totalitarian states, education has become a means of propaganda for government views and policies. The state in ancient India, however, did not attempt to control education, simply because it was liberally subsidising it. There were no Directors of Public Instruction and Inspectors and Deputy Inspectors of Schools to dictate and control educational policy. Even when grants were given to learned Brahmanas, there was no stipulation that they would be withdrawn if free education was not given by the donees. It was the king's duty to make such grants. It was the Brahmana's duty to teach even when there were no grants. Each side was to perform its duty, though there were no specific stipulations. Even when hundreds of villages were given to the Nālandā University by Hindu Gupta emperors, they did not stipulate that Buddhism should adopt a particular policy towards the religion of the donors. Monks at Nālandā declined to revise the traditional rules of seniority of monks in order to show some courtesy concession to a royal donor, who desired to be regarded as the seniormost when he had joined the church as a layman.<sup>1</sup> There was as perfect a toleration in education as there was in religion. Kings were giving grants to all institutions, without caring to control their policy or curricula. Of course this was not an unmixed blessing, as will be shown in the last chapter; but it cannot be denied that it helped the cause of free educational development.

**Government Help elsewhere :** The failure to organise an educational department might appear to the modern reader as a blemish in the ancient Indian state organisation. A glance at the contempo-

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1. Narasimhagupta Bālāditya wanted this concession, but it was refused. The only concession shown to him was that the seniority among novices should be determined by their age:

rary history shows, however, that the states in the West also had not only no State Education Departments, but were not accustomed to give any substantial grants to educational institutions started by private individuals. Schools in the Middle Ages in Europe were dependent not on the State but on the Church: it was the latter which provided for the expenses, supplied teachers and influenced aims and ideals.<sup>1</sup> Famous English Universities like Oxford and Cambridge grew out of no Order of Government or Resolution of Parliament: they were originally centres of scholars united by their zeal and aptitude for learning, and anxious to hand down the torch of learning to the next generation. Their sincerity and scholarship attracted donors like Walter de Merton and Wykenham, who came forward to provide hostels and colleges for residence and study.<sup>2</sup> Down to the 19th century education was financially dependent on the Church, private benefactors and corporations. In England, the state gave its first grant for primary education as late as 1832, and that was of £2000 only. In France the state took up the cause of education only after the great Revolution of 1788. It was in Germany that the state first began to zealously champion the cause of education; Martin Luther maintained that education ought to be supported by state and his advocacy proved effective. In India, however, the state recognised its responsibility to the cause of education since earliest time, as we have shown already. It believed in the spontaneous growth of education and so did not organise its own educational department.

**A Resume :** By making Upanayana obligatory and professions hereditary, by showing encouragement

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1: Rayment, *principles of education*, P, 13,

2. Mayhew, p. 77.



to learning in a variety of ways, by securing ample patronage from rulers and landlords, by penalising any stipulation for fees and by laying down a very high code of conduct for the teaching profession, Hindu society tried to make fairly efficient arrangement and provision for the education of the rising generation. The results show that before the decay set in, these measures for the spread of education proved to be fairly successful. As will be shown in Chapter VII, literacy was spread fairly widely among the higher classes, its percentage among them was probably as high as 75% at the beginning of the Christian era. In contemporary times in no other country in the world was there so wide a spread of literacy. Hindu achievements in the realm of medicine, metallurgy, astronomy, chemistry, spinning and weaving, sculpture and architecture were also of a high order, if judged by contemporary standards. There was, undoubtedly, a set back after about 800 A. D.; its causes will be discussed in the course of the concluding chapter.

## Chapter V.

### SOME EDUCATIONAL CENTRES AND INSTITUTIONS

Different types of educational Centres-Taxila-Effects of political vicissitudes on its educational system-Not a university of the modern type, but a cluster of private colleges-Strength of private colleges-Great fame of Taxila-Boarding and lodging arrangements-Subjects of study-Its later history and destruction-Banaras. Its early educational activity-As a centre of Buddhist learning-As a centre of Hindu learning-Literary and educational activity under the Muslim rule-Nālandā University-its rise in c. 450 A.D.-Lay-out of its campus-Buildings-Boarding and lodging arrangements-Number of scholars-High standard of scholarship and piety-Rush for admission from India and abroad-Library facilities-Lecture arrangements-Catholic and comprehensive curriculum-Administrative machinery-Work in Tibet-Destruction of the University-Valabhi University-Vikramasīlā University Other Buddhist centres of learning-Hindu temple college-At Salotgi, Ennayiram, Tirumuk-kudal, Tiruvorriyur and Malkapuram-Some other temple schools and colleges—*Agrahāra* villages as centres of higher education—Tols.

**Different Types of educational Centres ;**—It has been already shown in the last chapter how educational institutions came into existence in ancient India rather late in her history. Education was for a long time imparted by private teachers on their own responsibility. These were no doubt scattered all over the country, but they used to congregate in large numbers in certain places on account of the facilities they received there in their work. Such places were usually capitals of kingdoms or famous holy places (*tīrthas*). Kings and feudal chiefs were as a rule patrons of learning, and so learned Brahmanas were naturally attracted to their courts. It was this circumstance that made cities like Taxila, Pāṭaliputra, Kanauj, Mithilā, Dhārā and Anahilapattana<sup>1</sup> in northern India and Malkhed, Kalyāṇi and Tanjore in southern India famous centres of education. Holy places have

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(1) see *dvaśśravakosha* I. 7 for Anahilapattana as a centre of learning.

been since times immemorial famous centres of learning ; the pilgrim traffic supplied a subsidiary source of income to the famous teachers residing there. It is this circumstance that made Banaras, Kāñchī, Nasik, Karnāṭaka and Gangasagar, etc. famous centres of learning. Sometimes kings used to found colonies of learned Brahmanas by inviting them to settle in a new village and providing for their maintenance. Such villages were known as *agrahāra* villages and they naturally became centres of learning. Causes that led to the development of centres of education in Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples have been already explained in Chap. IV. Power and influence of the pontiffs of the different Hindu orders and Maṭhas like those of Śankarāchārya, Rāmanujāchārya, Madhvāchārya, Virāṣaivas, etc. increased considerably during the second millennium of the Christian era. The heads of these order used to receive substantial grants from the state and public and they were largely spent for the spread of higher religious and philosophical studies. These Maṭhas, therefore, became important centres of learning in the medieval times. In some cases the Pandits, who were affiliated to them used to teach secular subjects as well. It is proposed to give a short and succinct account of important centres and institutions of education in this chapter. The places have been arranged from the point of their importance and an antiquity.

### TAXILA<sup>1</sup>

**Prehistoric Times** :—Taxila, situated about 20 miles west of Rawalpindi, was undoubtedly the most important and ancient seat of learning in Ancient India. It was the capital of the important province

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1. The correct ancient spelling of the city's name is Takshaśīla. The popular present-day spelling is used in the book.

of Gandhāra and its history goes back into hoary antiquity. It was founded by Bharata and named after his son Taksha, who was established there as its ruler.<sup>1</sup> Janamejaya's serpent sacrifice was performed at this very place.<sup>2</sup> Not much is known of its early educational activities ; but by the 7th century B. C., it was a famous seat of learning, attracting scholars from distant cities like Rajagṛiha, Banaras, and Mithilā. It was famous for its philosophers in the days of Alexander the Great. Unfortunately we know very little about its educational activities from non-Jātaka sources.

**Political Vicissitudes :**—Taxila was conquered and occupied by the Persians in the 6th century B. C., by the Indo-Bactrians in the 2nd century B. C., by the Scythians in the 1st century B. C., by the Kushāṇas in the 1st century A. D. and by the Hūṇas in the 5th century A. D. We do not know what effects these political vicissitudes had over the educational activities of the place. The ruins give traces of three different city sites occupied at the beginning of the Bactrian, Scythian and Kushāṇa periods. It is quite possible that these political vicissitudes may have told upon the city's prosperity, which may in turn have affected the cause of education. Every successive power, however, continued to maintain its provincial headquarters at Taxila ; this circumstance must have soon obliterated the ravages of war.

**Their Effects on Education :** The Persian and Greek occupation must have affected the curricula of schools and colleges ; we have, however, only circumstantial evidence on the point. Epigraphical testimony shows conclusively that the Persian occupation

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1. *Rāmāyaṇa* VII, 101, 10-16.

2. *Mbh.*, I, 3, 20.

result in the replacement of the national Brāhmī script by the foreign Kharoshthī alphabet. The Scythian and Kushāṇa conquerors had no culture or civilisation of their own, but the Indo-Bactrian rulers were the inheritors of the rich Greek civilisation. Their rule in Taxila extended over a century and a quarter, and must have made some impression on the educational system of the place. It is quite possible that a few of the 'world renowned' teachers of Taxila may have learnt and opened classes in Greek language and literature in order to facilitate the appointment of their students in government services under the Greek administration. Among the 'śippas' taught at Taxila may have been included a training in Greek processes of coinage and sculpture. There was as yet no prejudice against foreign culture. It is quite possible that Greek dramas may have been performed in the courts of some of the numerous Greek princes and princelings. Some Indians also might have read and appreciated Sophocles and Euripedes. The working knowledge of Greek language might have been possessed by several classes of society, as it was the language of the conqueror.<sup>1</sup> Greek orientation in Taxila studies could not however have been considerable. Indo-Greek rulers themselves were cut off from their mother country, and many of the conquerors soon succumbed to the culture and religion of the conquered. It is, however, a great pity that the

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1. From the romantic history of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus we learn that in the 1st century A. D. Indians and Greeks at Taxila knew each other's philosophy and that the villagers around the Gandhāra capital could understand and speak Greek. There may be some exaggeration in this picture, but recent excavations at Taxila have confirmed some of the topographical details given by Philostratus (*Guide to Taxila* by Sir John Marshall, pp. 15 & 97). We may, therefore, conclude that his information about Indians' acquaintance with Greek language and literature may be at least partly true. Greek studies, therefore, must have figured in Taxila curriculum during the Greek rule.

historian of ancient Indian education should still be unable to supply authentic information about the precise extent of Greek influence on the system of education at Taxila.

**No organised Institutions :—**It may be observed at the outset that Taxila did not possess any colleges or university in the modern sense of the term. It was simply a centre of education. It had many famous teachers to whom hundreds of students flocked for higher education from all parts of northern India. But these teachers were not members of any institutions like professors in a modern college, nor were they teaching any courses prescribed by any central body like a modern university. Every teacher, assisted by his advanced students, formed an institution by himself. He admitted as many students as he liked. He taught what his students were anxious to learn. Students terminated their courses according to their individual convenience. There were no degree examinations, and therefore no degrees or diplomas.

**Strength of private Schools :—**Jātakas usually state that the 'world renowned' teachers of Taxila used to have five hundred students under their charge. This figure seems to be more conventional than real, as has been shown at p. 84. We get only one instance in the Sutasoma Jātaka<sup>1</sup> of what appears to be a real number of students reading under one teacher. Under the 'world renowned' teacher of this Jātaka, we are told that 103 princes from different parts of the country were learning archery. This teacher might have had very probably many assistants under him. Normally speaking, however, the number of students working under one teacher does not seem to have been more than 20 (*ante*, p. 84). The excavations

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1. Vol. V. p. 407.

at Taxila have not so far unearthed any extensive buildings, which can be taken to be big hostels or lecture halls, necessary for big colleges having 500 students on their rolls.

**The Fame of Taxila :—**As a centre of learning the fame of the city was unrivalled in the 6th century B. C. In those days communications were so difficult and dangerous that when their sons used to return home, parents used to congratulate themselves on having seen them returning during their own life time.<sup>1</sup> And yet we find students flocking to Taxila from far off cities like Banaras,<sup>2</sup> Rājagriha,<sup>3</sup> Mithilā<sup>4</sup> and Ujjayini.<sup>5</sup> Kuru and Kośala countries sent their own quota of students. One of the archery schools at Taxila had on its roll call, as we have seen already, 103 princes from different parts of India. Heir-apparents of Banaras are usually seen being educated at Taxila in the Jātakas. King Prasenajit of Kośala, a contemporary of the Buddha, was educated in the Gāndhāra capital.<sup>6</sup> Prince Jīvaka, an illegitimate son of Bimbisāra, spent seven years at Taxila in learning medicine and surgery.<sup>7</sup> As Pāṇini hailed from Sālātura near Attok, he also must have been an alumni of Taxila university. The same was the case with Kauṭilya, the author of the *Arthaśāstra*.

**Boarding and Lodging Arrangements :—**Students used to go to Taxila only for higher education. They were usually 16 when they came to seek admission

1. Jātaka, No. 456.

2. Tilamuṭṭhi Jātaka, No. 252.

3. Jātaka, No. 378.

4. *Ibid.*, No. 48J.

5. *Ibid.*, No. 336.

6. M. V. Chap VIII.

7. Jātaka, No. 498.

there. As a general rule, they stayed in the houses of their teachers. The well-to-do student used to pay their lodging and boarding expenses along with their fees, sometimes even at the beginning of their course. Some of them, who were very rich, like prince Jughā from Banaras, used to engage special houses for their residence (Jā. No. 456). Poor students, who could not pay any fees, used to work in their teacher's house by day; special classes were held for them at night.

**Subjects of Study :** As stated above, Taxila provided only higher education and students went there for specialisation. Jivaka had gone to the city for studying medicine and surgery and two youths from Banaras had repaired there for studying archery and elephant lore. The three Vedas, grammar, philosophy and eighteen *sippas* were the principal subjects selected for specialisation at Taxila. Among the latter were included medicine, surgery, archery and allied military arts, astronomy, astrology, divination, accountancy, commerce, agriculture, conveyancing, magic, snake charming, the art of finding treasures, music, dancing and painting. There were no caste restrictions on the choice of subject; Kshatriyas used to study the Vedas along with Brahmanas and the latter used to specialise in archery along with the Kshatriyas. A Brahmana royal priest of Banaras had once sent his son to Taxila not to learn the Vedas but to specialise in archery (Jā. No. 522).

**Later History and Destruction :** We know very little about the educational activities of Taxila subsequent to the beginning of the Christian era. But it is very probable that it continued to flourish down to the end of the Kushāna rule (c. 250 A. D.)



The Little Yueh-chis, who succeeded the Kushānas in the government of Taxila, were barbarous chiefs, as their coins indicate, and the cause of education must have suffered under their unenlightened administration. At the beginning of the 5th century A. D. when Fa Hsien visited the place, there was nothing there of any educational importance.<sup>1</sup> Worse days, however, were in store for this Queen of Learning. The Hūṇa avalanche came at the middle of the 5th century A. D. and ruined whatever was left after the Little Yueh-chi depredations. At the time when Yuan Chwang visited the city in the 7th century A. D., it had lost all its glory and importance. The famous monastery of Kumāralabdha, where that celebrated Sautrāntika scholar had composed his expository works, was in ruins and the condition of the vast majority of the remaining Buddhist establishments was no better.<sup>2</sup> When it is remembered that the inhabitants of Taxila at this time were plucky and devoted adherents of Buddhism, the sad plight of their monasteries will at once convince us that the city was completely wrecked by the Hūṇa invasions. Gone were the days of its former educational glory, never to return.

### BANARAS<sup>3</sup>

**Early History :** In early Vedic literature Banaras does not figure either as a centre of pilgrimage or as a centre of learning. This is but natural, for it took centuries for the Vedic religion to penetrate to eastern United Provinces, Bihar and Bengal. The people of Banaras accepted the new

1. Legge, Fa Hsien, p. 32

2. Watters, I, p. 240, 245

3. See Altekar, *Benares; Past and Present*, for original sources of this section.

religion rather reluctantly and for a long time<sup>1</sup> their loyalty to it was by no means unswerving. In the Upanishadic period however Banaras became a centre of Aryan religion and culture. One of its kings, Ajātaśatru, figures as a philosopher in the Upanishads, anxious to emulate the example of king Janaka of Mithilā as a patron of learning. For a long time, however, Taxila was a more famous centre of learning than Banaras. Kings of Banaras itself used to send their sons to far-off Taxila, and many of the teachers of this city that figure in the Jātakas are seen to be past students of the Taxila University.<sup>2</sup> In the course of time, however, they began to attract scholars from far and wide. Kosiya and Tittiri Jātakas, for instance, refer to the famous teachers of Banaras maintaining schools for the teaching of the three Vedas and 18 Sippas and Akitta Jātaka describes how students used to flock to Banaras for higher education, when they were about 16 years of age.

**Banaras as a Centre of Buddhist Learning :** In the 7th century B. C., Banaras was probably the most famous centre of education in eastern India; that seems to have been one of the reasons for its being selected by the Buddha as the place for the first promulgation of his gospel. With the imperial patronage under Asoka, the Sarnath monastery on the outskirts of Banaras must have become a famous centre of learning. It went on continuously prospering; in the 7th century A. D., it possessed resplendant and beautiful buildings with tiers of balconies and rows of

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1. King Dhṛitarāshtra of Banaras is known to have given up sacrificial fires because horse of the Asvamedha sacrifice was carried away by the Bharata king Śatānīka Satrājī. *S. Br.* XIII.5. 4. 19.

2. Cf. तद्धसिलं गत्वा सब्वसिप्पाणि उग्गह्णित्वा वाराणसिय  
दिस्सामोक्खो आचारियो हुत्वा पंचमाणवकसत्तानि सिप्पं वाचेति ।  
No. 150. See also No. 80.

halls.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately Yuan Chwang does not State anything about the educational activity of the Sarnath monastery, but there can be no doubt that it must have emulated the glorious example of neighbouring Nālandā. It had 1500 monk-students. There is ample evidence to show that it continued to be a flourishing centre of Buddhist learning and pilgrimage down to the 12th century A. D.<sup>2</sup>

**Banaras as a Centre of Hindu Learning :** We do not possess much detailed information about Banaras as a centre of Hindu learning during the first millennium of the Christian era. Only the *Bhaviṣhya Purāṇa* observes in prophetic vein that Banaras will be a famous centre of scholarship;<sup>3</sup> the rest are content merely with describing its sanctity as a holy place. Nor have we so far found any inscriptions recording grants given to any educational institutes at Banaras. In spite of the example of neighbouring Nālandā, Banaras does not seem to have organised any public educational institutions. Its learned Brahmanas continued to promote individually the cause of education in the traditional manner. Their fame, however, was gradually reaching all the corners of India. Scholars and philosophers like Saṅkarācārya found it necessary to repair the city to get their new theories recognised and published. In the 11th century A. D. Banaras and Kashmir were the most famous centres of learning in India.<sup>4</sup> We may well presume that most of the learned donees of the

1. Watters, II. p. 48.

2. Kumāradevī, the Buddhist wife of the Hindu king Govindachandra, had given an endowment to the establishment in the latter half of the 12th century A. D. Excavations also show that the establishment continued to flourish down to c. 1200 A. D.

3. *Bhaviṣhya Pu*, Brahmakhaṇḍa, Chap. 51.2.3.

4. The exodus of learned families from the Punjab was responsible for an increase in the scholarly population of both Kashmir and Kāsi towards the beginning of the 11th century.

Gahadwal grants residing in Banaras were conducting efficient Sanskrit schools and colleges in the 12th century A.D.

**Banaras under Muslim Rule:** When Banaras passed under the Muslim rule in c. 1200 A. D., hundreds of its temples were razed to the ground by Kutb-ud-din Aibak. The iconoclastic and proselytizing zeal of the new rulers drove away a number of learned Brahmana families to south India. We hear very little of any literary or educational activity of Banaras during the period 1200 to 1500 A. D. When however the Deccan also gradually passed under the Muslim rule, scholars in India seem to have made up their mind once more to repair to holy Banaras and make it a centre of Hindu learning and scholarship by their united effort in spite of the Muslim rule established there. A number of scholarly families from Maharashtra and Karnatak repaired to Banaras in the 16th century and their descendants continued to dominate Banaras scholarship for about three centuries. It is important to note that some Muslim rulers also like Akbar, Shan Jahan and Dara Shikoh extended their patronage to some of the famous scholars of Banaras. The same was done by a few of their Hindu feudatories in Uttar Pradesh and Central India. Royal patronage during this period however was on the whole more an exception than a rule, if the lamp of learning was kept burning at Banaras in medieval time, the credit must on the whole be given to the great love of religion and scholarship of Banaras Brahmanas. Education however continued to be imparted not in public institutions but through private teachers. While describing Banaras as a centre of learning during the 17th century A. D., Bernier says, 'Banaras is a kind of University, but it has no college or regular classes as in our Universities; but it resembles

rather the school of the ancients, the masters being spread over the different parts of the town in private houses..... Some teachers have four and some six disciples; the most eminent may have twelve or fifteen, but this is the largest number.<sup>1</sup>

**Literary Activity :—**The literary activity of Banaras was very remarkable during this period. A number of works on sacred law (Dharmaśāstra), grammar, poetics, logic and philosophy were composed by Banaras scholars in medieval times. If put together, they would be equal to the work done by any other five centres of learning in India. This would give some idea of the literary educational pre-eminence of Banaras during the medieval period.

### NĀLANDĀ

**Early History :** Nālandā, about 55 miles south east of Patna, was a famous Buddhist place since early time as it was the place of the birth and death of Sāriputta, the right hand disciple of the Buddha. Asoka is said to have built a temple there. But its rise as a centre of learning has to be placed by about 450 A. D. ; for, Fa Hien, who had visited this place in c. 410 A. D., does not refer to its educational importance.<sup>2</sup> Very soon thereafter Nālandā rapidly rose into importance owing to the patronage of a number of Gupta emperors. That the Gupta rulers, who were themselves orthodox Hindus, should have contributed a lion's share to the development, equipment and endowment of the greatest Buddhist University, speaks volumes for the catholicity of the age. Śakrāditya, who was probably Kumāragupta I ( 414-455 A. D. ), laid the foundation

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1. *Travels in India* p. 341.

2. According to Tārānāth, Āryadeva, a disciple of Nāgārjuna, was a Nālandā scholar. This, if true, would take back the antiquity of Nālandā by about a couple of centuries. The identity of both Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva and their precise time are not yet definitely determined. Bose, *Indian Teachers*, pp. 148-9.

of the greatness of Nālandā by founding and endowing a monastery there. The splendid Buddha temple in this monastery was for centuries the central place of worship for the congregation. Tathagata-gupta ( who cannot yet be definitely identified ), Nara-simhagupta Bālāditya ( 468-472 A. D. ) and Budha-gupta ( c. 475-500 A. D. ) added one monastery each to the establishment.<sup>1</sup> Vajra, an unidentified successor of Bālāditya, and another unnamed king of central India added two further monasteries to the establishment. New buildings continued to be erected by Hindu and Buddhist donors down to the 11th century.

**The Lay-out and Buildings :** Excavations have shown that Nālandā University covered an area at least one mile long and half a mile broad. Monastic buildings and *stupas* attached to them were built according to a preconceived plan; they were all arranged in a row and not huddled together in any haphazard fashion. The central college had seven halls attached to it; besides there were 300 smaller rooms for the lecturing work. The buildings were superb, several storeys in height. Hwui Li's statement that the upper rooms towered above the clouds and enabled a spectator to see how they changed their shape is of course an exaggeration, but it has now received an unexpected corroboration from a contemporary record which also avers that the tops of the buildings at Nālandā touched the clouds.<sup>2</sup> We may therefore take it that the towers and turrets of the colleges, temples and monasteries at Nālandā must have been of impressive height. There were also deep

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1. The sequence of these rulers and their time, given both by Yuan Chwang and his biographer, seem to be wrong. See Watters, II p. 164; *Life*, pp. 110-111.

2. यस्यामम्बुधरावलेहिशिखरश्रेणी विहारवली ।

मालेवोर्ध्वविराजिनी विरचिता घात्रा मनोज्ञा भुवः ॥ *EI.*, xx, p. 43

and translucent ponds covered with blue lotuses, which added to the beauty of the place and supplied water and flowers to the establishment. The whole colony was surrounded by an encircling wall with a door in the southern side.<sup>1</sup>

**Boarding and Lodging Arrangement :** Monk-students were lodged in monasteries specially built for the purpose. Recent excavations have so far revealed the existence of thirteen such monasteries, and a glance at the topography shows that some more must have existed. Monasteries were at least two storeys in height and had both single-seated and double-seated rooms in them. In some monasteries each room had one stone bench for each occupant and was also provided with niches for lamp, books, etc. In one corner of the court-yard of each monastery, a well has been unearthed, showing that the problem of water supply was not overlooked. Rooms were assigned to the monk-students according to their seniority, and redistribution took place every year. Excavations have not so far thrown any light on the messing arrangements; neither kitchens nor dining halls have been unearthed. The University had received 200 rich villages as endowment<sup>2</sup> and so could offer free boarding and clothing to its students. The usual practice in Buddhist monasteries was to offer these facilities to lay students, only if they agreed to perform some menial service.<sup>3</sup> It is however possible that Nālandā

1. Beal, *The Life of Hiuen Tsang* ( by Shaman Hwui ) pp. 109-114; Watters, II, pp. 164-171 and Itsing, pp. 80 85, 86, and 154 are the main sources of information about Nālandā.

2. This is the number given by I-tsing, who had stayed at Nālandā for 10 years. Yuan Chawang's biographer mentions only 100 villages in this connection. More villages may have been received in the interval between the two writers.

3. I-tsing, p. 108. In medieval Christian, monasteries, the practice was to offer free tuition to all those who intended to join the Order, the laity was expected to pay small voluntary fee for the education of the children. Graves, *A History*, p. 31

may have offered free lodging and boarding to its lay students also,—who were usually Hindus,—in view of its having received so many endowments from Hindu patrons.

**The Number of Scholars :** When I-tsing was living at Nālandā ( c. 675 A. D. ), there were more than 3,000 monks residing in the establishment ( p. 154 ). The biographer of Yuan Chwang states that in the second quarter of the seventh century the number of the students of Nālandā would always reach 10,000 ( p. 112 ). The biographer had never been to India and his information therefore was second hand. His figure seems to be a little exaggerated since it is given in round numbers, and since Yuan Chwang himself simply observes that there were some thousand brethren residing at the place ( II, p. 165 ). It would, however, seem certain that the actual number of the monks staying at Nālandā must have been at least about 5,000 towards the middle of the 7th century A. D.

**Both a Monastery and a University :** Nālandā, however, was not a mere monastery; it had obtained so wide a fame primarily because it was a very famous centre of learning. Yuan Chwang says, 'In the establishment were some thousand brethren, all men of great learning and ability, several hundreds being highly esteemed and famous; the brethren were very strict in observing the precepts and regulations of their order; learning and discussing they found the day too short, day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection. Hence foreign students came to the establishment to put an end to their doubts and then became celebrated, and those who 'stole' the name ( of Nālandā ) were all treated with respect wherever they went, ( II, p. 165 ). The names of deep scholars and skilful debators, who had distinguished themselves at the



University, used to be written in white on the lofty gate of the University for being known to every fresher and visitor (I-tsing, p. 176).

**High Standard of Piety and Scholarship :** The head abbots of Nālandā used to be as much celebrated for piety as for scholarship. Amongst them were 'Dharmapāla and Chandrapāla, who gave a fragrance to the Buddha's teachings, Guṇamati and Sthiramati of excellent reputation among contemporaries, Prabhāmitra of clear argument, Jinamitra of elevated conversation, Jñānamitra of model character and perspicacious intellect and Śīlābhadrā whose perfect excellence was buried in obscurity.<sup>1</sup> These scholars were not, however, content merely to teach and expound; they were authors of several treatises, widely studied and highly valued by their contemporaries. The above seven scholars flourished in the first half of the 7th century; the total number of high class scholars produced at Nālandā during its history of about 700 years must have been very great. At the time of Yuan Chwang's visit the average scholarship of the establishment also was very high. Out of its 5,000 ( or 10,000 ) monks, there were a thousand who could explain thirty collections of Sūtras, and perhaps ten who could explain fifty.<sup>2</sup>

**Rush for Admission from India and Abroad :** There was a great rush for admission to the Nālandā University. Students from all parts of India and also from distant foreign countries were anxious to get the benefit of its instructions. Fa Hien, Yuan Chwang and I-tsing were not the only Chinese scholars that were attracted to Nālandā by its fame as a centre of learning. During the short interval of thirty years between the visits of Yuan Chwang

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1. Watters, II p: 165.

2. *Life*. p. 112.

and I-tsing, Thon-mi, Hiuen Chiu, Taou-hi, Hwui-nieh, Aryavarman, Buddhadharma, Taou-sing, Tang and Hwui Lu, hailing from distant countries like China, Korea, Tibet and Tokhara had visited Nālandā and spent considerable time there in studying and copying manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> The standard of admission was naturally high; 'of those from abroad, who wished to enter the schools of discussion, the majority, beaten by the difficulties of the problems, withdrew; and those who were deeply versed in old and modern learning were admitted, only two or three out of ten succeeding.'<sup>2</sup>

**Library Facilities :** The Nālandā authorities had realised that a monastery without a library was like a castle without an armoury. The University was maintaining a splendid library to meet the needs of the hundreds of teachers and thousands of students that were engaged in the study of different sciences. One of the reasons why Chinese scholars used to spend months together at Nālandā was to get true copies of the sacred texts and other works of Buddhism. I-tsing got copied at Nālandā 400 Sanskrit works amounting to 5,00,00<sup>1</sup> verses. Significantly enough the library quarter was known as *Dharma-gaṇja* 'Mart of Religion.'<sup>3</sup> It was located in three splendid buildings appropriately called *Ratna-sāgara*, *Ratnodadhi*, *Ratnaraṇjaka*.<sup>4</sup>

**Lecturing Arrangement ; Strength of Classes :** In the monk population of about 5,000 ( perhaps 10,000 ), a thousand could explain, as we have seen already, twenty collections of Sūtras. This means that there were about a thousand competent teachers to look after the education of about 4,000, but in no case,

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1. *Liye*. Introduction, pp. NXVII-XXXVI

2. Watters, II, p. 165

3. I-tsing p. 1

4. Vidyabhushan, *History of Indian Logic*, p 516

more than 9,000 monk students. On the average therefore each teacher was in charge of about not more than nine students. Personal attention was thus possible to each student and the teaching therefore must have been very efficient. The college had eight big halls and 300 smaller apartments and every day the authorities used to arrange for about a hundred lectures. Learned monk teachers were held in high veneration and were provided with sedan chairs. They were experts in the art of teaching and expounding; I-tsing gratefully observes, 'I have been very glad that I have had an opportunity of acquiring knowledge personally from them, which I should otherwise have never possessed.

**Curriculum :** The curriculum at Nālandā was very comprehensive and catholic. The establishment belonged to the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism, but the works of the rival school, the Hīnayāna one, were also taught. This necessitated a study of Pali language, in which most of the Hīnayāna works were composed. Works of the famous Mahāyāna scholars like Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Asaṅga and Dharmakīrti must have been specially studied. But it is not to be supposed that the curriculum of the University was a sectarian one in the sense that it neglected Hindu subjects. In the first place it must be noted that subjects like grammar, logic and literature were common to both the Hindus and the Buddhists. Secondly, we have to remember that Buddha and Hindu religion and philosophy had become so intricately interconnected with each other that to study the one without the other had become practically impossible not only for the ambitious controversialist but also for the sincere lover of truth. Buddhists themselves inform us that the three Vedas, Vedānta and Sāṃkhya philosophy were taught at the

University along with 'miscellaneous works'.<sup>1</sup> The latter expression probably included the study of subjects like Dharmaśāstra (sacred law), Purāṇas, astronomy, astrology, etc., which were very important for the lay Hindu and Buddhist students. The study of medicine *chikitsa-śāstra*, which is referred to in the sacred canon, was also prosecuted at the place.<sup>2</sup>

**Administration :** At the head of the general administration was the abbot-principal, who used to be assisted by two councils, one academic and the other administrative. How these bodies used to function has been already described in the last chapter (p. 76). To arrange for the free boarding and lodging of so vast a number of students as 5,000 (or perhaps 10,000) was a very costly affair; the University was enabled to do it because different kings had assigned the revenues of a large number of villages for the upkeep of the establishment. The number of these villages was 200 during I-tsing's stay at the University (c. 675-685 A. D.). Sealings of a number of these villages, obviously attached to letters sent by them to the University administration, have been found in excavations.

**Later History : A foreign endowment :** Nālanda continued to be a famous centre of learning down to the 12th century A. D. An 8th century inscription describes how it was then excelling all other towns and cities on account of its scholars who were well versed in sacred texts and philosophy.<sup>3</sup> In the 9th century the University continued to enjoy international reputation; Balaputradeva, a king of Java and Sumatra, being attracted by its fame, built a monastery there and induced his friend and ally, king Devapāla of Bengal,

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1. *Life*, p. 112.

2. *Mahāvagga*, Chap. VI

3. *E. I.* XX, p. 43.

to grant five villages for its upkeep.<sup>1</sup> Part of this endowment was reserved for the purpose of copying books for the University library (*Dharmaratnasya lekha-nārīham*).

**Work in Tibet:** From the 8th century onwards, the scholars at Nālandā began to play an active part in the propagation of Buddhist religion and culture in Tibet. Arrangement therefore must have been made for teaching Tibetan at the institution. Chandragomin, a Nālandā monk, who flourished at the beginning of the 8th century A. D., was the pioneer in the field. Scores of his works were translated into Tibetan; many scholars were in fact engaged in translation work. Śāntarakshita, another Nālandā monk and scholar, was invited to Tibet by its king Khri-sron-den-tsan in 749 A. D., for the purpose of preaching Buddhism. He was given a royal reception and the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet was built under his instructions. He became its chief abbot and vigorously helped the spread of Buddhism till his death in 762 A. D. He received very valuable cooperation in this work from Padma-sambhava, a Kashmirian monk educated at Nālandā.<sup>2</sup> Intellectual and literary activity of Nālandā must have continued in subsequent centuries also, for several manuscripts have been preserved to this time, which were copied at Nālandā during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries A. D.

1. *E. J.*, XXVII. p. 310, Df.—

नालंदागुणवृन्दलुब्धमनसा भक्त्या च शौद्धोदने ।

नानासद्गुणभिक्षुसंघवसतिस्तस्यां विहारः कृतः ॥

.....

सुवर्णद्वीपाधिपमहाराजश्रीबलपुत्रदेवेन वयं विज्ञापिताः ।

यथा मया श्रीनालंदायां विहारः कृतः ।.....॥

2. Bose, *Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities*, pp. 116-31.

**Supersession by Vikramasila University :** Tārā-nāth informs us that the professors of Vikramaṣilā were often appointed to watch over the affairs of Nālandā by the Pāla rulers.<sup>1</sup> From the 11th century onwards the new University of Vikramaṣilā began to receive a greater share of the royal patronage; this circumstance may have led to the decline of Nālandā during the 11th and 12th centuries. Evidence from the Tibetan sources shows that by this time Tantric practices had acquired a hold over the Buddhist mind and it may have perhaps affected the progress of serious studies. We have, however, no definite evidence on the point.

**The Destruction of the University :** The ruin of the establishment was brought about by the Muslim invaders under Bakhtiyar Khilji towards the beginning of the 13th century. From *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, we learn that the buildings were burnt or destroyed and the whole of the monk population was put to the sword.<sup>2</sup> Thus perished this famous university at the hands of fanatic invaders, who did not know its value.

### VALABHI<sup>3</sup>

**A famous Centre of Learning :** Valabhi, situated near modern Wala in Kathiawar, was the capital of an important kingdom and a port of international trade with numerous warehouses full of rarest merchandise. During the 7th century, however, it was more famous as a seat of learning. I-tsing informs us that its fame rivalled with that of Nālandā in eastern India;<sup>4</sup> it is however a pity that he should not have given us any details about its

1. *Ibid*, p. 38.

2. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, II p. 306.

3. See Altekar and Dowson *A History of Towns and Cities in Gujrat and Kathiawar*, pp 39-40 for the history of this place.

4. P. 177.

literary and educational activity. There were about a hundred Buddhists monasteries at the place in c. 640 A. D.<sup>1</sup>, and they accommodated six thousand monk-students. The famous Buddhist scholars, Sthiramati and Guṇamati, were the leading scholars of the University at the middle of the 7th century A. D.<sup>2</sup> Like Nālandā, Valabhi also was not an exclusively Buddhist or monastic centre of learning. Even Brahmanas from the distant Gangetic plain used to send their sons to that place for higher education.<sup>3</sup> Graduates at Valabhi used to be appointed to posts in the executive line (I-tsing, p. 177) ; this would have been impossible if secular subjects like law, economics, accountancy and literature had not been cultivated at the place. The University was famous for its catholicity and intellectual freedom. We are told that the scholars from all parts of India used to assemble at Valabhi and stay there for at least two or three years to discuss 'possible and impossible doctrines.' They used to become famous for their wisdom, when they were assured of the correctness of their opinions by the doctors at Valabhi. The names of the famous scholars of the University were written in white on its lofty gates, as was also done at Nālandā. (*Ibid.* pp. 176-7).

**Financial Support :** Valabhi was a rich city ; it had a hundred citizens whose wealth amounted to a million'. The University used to receive

1. Watters, II p. 246.

2. A copper plate grant given in 480 A. D. to a monastery founded by Sthiramati has been found ; *I. A.*, VI, p. 11,

अन्तर्वेद्याभूत्पूर्वं वसुदत्त इति द्विजः ।

विष्णुदत्ताभिधानश्च पुत्रस्तस्योपपद्यत ॥

स विष्णुदत्तो वयसा पूर्णषोडशवत्सरः ।

गंतुं प्रवृत्ते विद्याप्राप्तये बलभीपुरम् ॥ K. S. S. Chap.

considerable support from these merchant princes. The Maitraka kings, who were ruling there during c. 480 to 775 A. D., were also great patrons of learning; they used to give direct grants for the purpose of meeting the general expenses of the University as also for strengthening its library.<sup>1</sup> Scholars who completed their educational course at the University used to receive either appointments in government service or some financial help to enable them to start their life.<sup>2</sup> This continued to be the case till c. 775 A. D. when the reigning dynasty succumbed to an Arab attack, which naturally paralysed the work of the University for some time. The successors of the Maitrakas, though not so well known to history, continued their patronage of the University, as soon as the normal times returned, and the place continued to be a famous centre of education attracting students even from distant Bengal down to the 12th century.<sup>3</sup>

#### VIKRAMAŚILĀ<sup>4</sup>

**An international University :—**Vikramasīla monastery, found by king Dharmapāla in the 8th century, was a famous centre of international learning for more than four centuries. King Dharmapāla (c. 775-800 A. D.) was its founder; he built temples and monasteries at the place and liberally endowed them.

1. सद्धर्मस्य पुस्तकोपचयार्थम् । I.A., VII, p. 67, ff.

2. I-tsing, p. 177.

3. Bhavadeva (c. 1060 to 1110 A.D.) is described as *Bālavālabhī-bhujāga* and the term is thus explained by the commentator पुरा किल बलभी नाम अध्ययनशाला आसीत् । I.H.Q., 1946 p. 134.

4. Tibetan sources inform us that this monastery was situated in Bihar on a hill on the right bank of the Ganges. Mr. De's identification of Vikramasīlā with Patharaghata hill, 24 miles to the east of Bhagalpur, seems to be correct. The place is full of ancient and extensive ruins and may yield a rich reward to the excavator. J. A. S. B., N. S., V, p. 7.



He also erected several halls for the lecturing work. His successors continued to patronise the University down to the 13th century.<sup>1</sup> The monks of the establishment were usually distinguished scholars and the fame of the monastery soon spread beyond the Himalayas. There was continuous intercourse going on between Tibet and Vikramaśilā for four centuries. A special guest house was maintained for the use of Tibetan scholars coming to learn at the feet of Indian Pandits. One cannot help admiring the continuous tradition of high scholarship that was maintained at Vikramaśilā throughout its history. Tibetan sources inform us that Buddha, Jñānapāda, Vairocana, Rakṣita, Jetārī Ratnākara-Śānti, Jñāna-sri-mitra, Ratnavajra, Abhayankaragupta, Tathāgata-rakṣita and a host of other Vikramaśilā scholars wrote numerous books in Sanskrit and translated scores of them in Tibetan. The most distinguished in this galaxy of Vikramaśilā scholars was undoubtedly Dīpaṅkara Śrī-Jñāna, more commonly known as Upādhyaya Atīśa, who flourished in the 11th century A.D. He went to Tibet at the invitation of its king Chan Chūb and played an important part in the reformation of the Buddhism of that country. As many as 200 books, both original and in translation, have been attributed to him by the Tibetan tradition.<sup>3</sup>

**Strength of the University :** When there was such a distinguished galaxy of scholars at Vikramaśilā it is but natural that the numerical strength of the establishment should have enormously increased by the number of scholars attracted to the establishment. In the 12th century there were 3,000 monk scholars

1. Bose *Indian Teachers*, pp. 30 ff.

2. Das, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow* p. 58.

3. Bose, *Indian Teachers*, pp. 82, 105.

residing at the place.<sup>1</sup> The college possessed a rich and extensive library, which excited admiration even of its Muslim destroyers.

**General Administration :** The administrative management of the Vikramaśilā establishment was presided over by the chief abbot. Different members of the board were assigned to different administrative duties like the ordination of the novices, supply and supervision of servants, distribution of food and fuel, assignment of monastic work, etc. Monk professors led a simple life, the cost of maintaining one of them being equal to the cost of supporting four ordinary monks.<sup>2</sup>

**Academic Administration :** Academic administration was vested in a council of six *dvārapaṇḍitas* presided over by the chief abbot. The function of the *dvārapaṇḍitas* was to test the scholarship of those seeking admission to the college. During the reign of king Kanaka (?), the following were the *dvārapaṇḍitas* of the establishment :—

- Eastern Gate : Āchārya Ratnākara-śānti
- Western „ : Vāgīśvara-kīrti of Banaras
- Northern „ : Naropa
- Southern „ : Prajnākara-mati
- First Central Gate : Ratna-vajra of Kashmir
- Second Central Gate : Jnāna-śrī-mitra of Gauḍa.<sup>3</sup>

**Courses of Study and Degree :** Grammar, logic, metaphysics, Tantras and ritualism were the main subjects specialised at the institution. The curriculum was thus not so wide or catholic as that at Nālandā, outlined above. Unfortunately we have no information of the duration or the gradation of the course at

1. *Ibid*, p. 84.

2. *Ibid*, p. 85.

3. Vidyabhushana. *History of Indian Logic*, p. 520.

Vikramaśilā, but there is every probability that it was more systematically organised than was the case at any other centre of ancient Indian education. For, unlike at any other college, we find diplomas and titles being given to the Vikramaśilā students at the end of their course by the reigning kings of Bengal. Tibetan authorities inform us that Jetāri and Ratnavajra had received degrees at the hands of king Mahipāla and Kanaka respectively.<sup>1</sup> The memory of the distinguished alumni of the place was kept ever green in the mind of the congregation by their pictures being put on the walls of the college halls. This honour is known to have been shown to Nāgārjuna and Atiśa.

**Destruction of the University :—**In 1203, the Vikramaśilā monastery was destroyed by the Mahomadens under Bakhtyar Khilji, who seem to have mistaken it for a fort. At that time Śākyaśrī-bhadra was at the helm of the monastic affairs. The account of the destruction of the monastery has been preserved by the author of *Tabākāt-i-nāsiri*. We read, 'The greater number of the inhabitants of the place were Brahmanas (i. e., Buddhist Bhiksus) and the whole of these Brahmanas had their heads shaven, and they were all slain. There were a great number of books on the religion of the Hindus there, and when all these books came under the observation of the Mussalmans, they summoned a number of Hindus that they might give them information respecting the import of these books; but the whole of the Hindus had been killed. On becoming acquainted (with the contents of those books) it was found that the whole fortress and city was a college'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Bose, *Indian Teacher*, p. 47, p. 61

2. Raverty's translation of *Tabākāt-i-Nāsiri*, Vol. I, p. 552; (1881).

Sākya-śrī-bhadra and a few others, who escaped the general slaughter, fled to Tibet, Such was the tragic end of this famous college.

### OTHER BUDDHIST CENTRES OF LEARNING

#### **Other Monasteries as Centres Of Learning :**

From stray and casual references in the *Life* and *Travels* of Yuan Chwang, we learn that (1) Jayendra monastery near the capital of Kashmir, (2 and 3) Chinapati and Jallandar monasteries in the Punjab, (4) Matipur monastery in Bijnor district, U. P., (5) Bhadra monastery near Kanauj, (6) a monastery in Hiraṇya (?) country, and (7) another at Amraoti in Andhra country were notable centres of learning in the 7th century.<sup>1</sup> At most of these monasteries Yuan Chwang stayed for several months in order to study Buddhist works and get their copies. Their presiding abbots were distinguished authors, widely known in the country. At the time of Yuan Chwang's visit in the 7th century we must remember that Buddhism was on the decline in the country, and yet so many monasteries were flourishing centres of Buddhist learning. Buddhism continued to be strong in Bihar and Bengal down to the 12th century A. D. and we find monasteries in that province like those at Odantapuri and Jagadalla Vihāra (founded by king Rāmapāla at his capital Rāmāvatī) were famous centres of learning spreading the holy knowledge both in India and abroad. We would not be wrong if we assume that during the days of Buddhist ascendancy, at least ten percent of the well-endowed monasteries were respectable centres of learning and education, at least of the status of modern degree colleges. The contribution of Buddhism to the cause of learning and education was thus very great.

**Kashmir as a Centre of Learning :** Both Buddhism and Hinduism flourished in Kashmir and it became a

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1. See *Life*, pp. 69, 70, 77, 81, 84, 127 and 137 respectively.

famous centre of learning from the beginning of the Christian era. Hindu centres of learning were known as Maṭhas and Buddhist centres as Vihāras; Yuan Chwang saw about a hundred of the latter in c. 625 A.D. Rulers of Kashmir like king Lalitāditya, queen Jayamatī, king Yaśaskara, queen Diddī, king Ananta etc. endowed several Maṭhas or Vihāras. Being centres of learning these Maṭhas and Vihāras were regarded as unviolable. Sometimes kings in troubles used to take refuge in them and bring the institutions into trouble. Jayendravihāra, where Yuan Chwang had spent a year for study, was razed to the ground by king Kshemagupta because his enemy Dāmara Saṅgrāma had taken refuge in it ( *Raj.* VI. 1711 ).

Kashmir was an important centre of international learning when Buddhism was flourishing in Central Asia. The famous Buddhist scholar Kumārajīva had travelled from Khotan to Kashmir in order to study there for two years. A Chinese scholar, O'kong, came to Kashmir and studied at Muktipādavihāra in Hushkapura (Stein, *Itinerary of O'kong*, p. 5). Intellectual traffic however was not only one way; Kashmir Buddhists also went out abroad to spread the gospel of the Śākya sage. Most famous among them was Guṇavarman, who flourished in the 5th century A. D. Though belonging to a princely family, he discarded temporal prospects and pleasures, entered the holy orders and first went to Ceylon and then to Java. There he received an invitation from the Chinese emperor and went to China and spent his life there. Guṇavarman was the pontiff who permitted Chinese women to become nuns.

**Kashmir in Medieval Times:** When the Punjab passed under the Muslim rule in c. 1010 A. D., there was a large exodus of the Punjab scholars into Kashmir, which thus became an even more famous centre of learning. The poet Bilhaṇa ( c. 1100 A. D. ) boasts that in his native land, even women spoke both Sanskrit

and Prakrit ( *Vikramāṅkadevacharit*, XVIII. 6). Kashmir Pandits continued to preserve the tradition of imparting free education even when the country passed under the Muslim rule. At the time when Bühler visited the State in the eighties of the last century, there were a large number of Pandits, who used to give free education to 10 or 12 students each.

### HINDU TEMPLE COLLEGES.

**Introduction :** We have seen already how educational activity became a part of the daily monastic life fairly early in the history of Buddhism. It is, however, only from the 10th century that we get evidence of Hindu temples becoming centres of higher education. It is, however, quite possible that temples began to undertake educational work much earlier, though we have yet no evidence on the point. The causes that led to this new development have been indicated already at p, 75.

### SALOTGI TEMPLE COLLEGE.

**A famous and free College :** The village of Salotgi in Bijapur District of the Bombay Presidency was a famous centre, probably of Vedic learning, in the 10th and 11th centuries A. D. The Sanskrit college that flourished at this place must have existed for a long time, for it eventually transformed the original name of the place Pāvītṭage, into Sālōṭgi, which is an abbreviated and Prakritised compound of Sālā and Pāvītṭage. The college was located in a spacious hall, attached to the temple of Trayi-Purusha, which was built by Nārāyaṇa, a minister of the Rashtrakūṭa emperor Krishṇa III. Owing to its far-spread fame for efficiency, the college could attract students from different parts of the country. The strength of the college is not known, but it seems that 27 houses were necessary for lodging the students. An endowment of 12 Nivartanas ( probably equal to 60 acres ) of land was made for meeting the lighting

charges of the boarding house.<sup>1</sup> The students were offered free boarding, an endowment of 500 Nivartanas having been received for that purpose. It would appear that at least 200 students were offered free boarding, lodging and education at this institution. The salary of the principal was provided for by another endowment of 50 Nivartanas. The inscription is silent about the salaries of the other teachers.

**Public Support :** The inhabitants of the village were not slow to appreciate the benefits of the institution; they had agreed to offer to the college a donation of five rupees at every marriage, of two and half rupees at every Upanayana and of a rupee and quarter at every tonsure ceremony. Besides whenever a feast was given in the village, the host was expected to invite as many teachers and students as possible. A later inscription from the same place informs us that when the college hall built by the minister of Kṛṣṇa III in 945 A. D. crumbled down in the next century, it was rebuilt by a local magnate.

1. The relevant verses from the inscription are given below ;—

नारायणोऽभिधानेन नारायण इवापरः ।  
 प्रधानः कृष्णराजस्य मन्त्री सन्तन्धिविग्रहे ॥  
 तेनेयं कारिता शाला धीविशाला मनोरमा ।  
 अत्र विद्यार्थिनः संति नानाजनपदोद्भवाः ॥  
 शालाविद्यार्थिसंघाय दत्तवान्भूमिमुत्तमाम् ।  
 मान्यां निवर्तनानां तु पञ्चभिश्च शतैर्मिताम् ॥  
 निवर्तनानि दीपार्थं मान्यानि द्वादशैव च ।  
 पञ्च पुष्पाणि देयानि विवाहे सति तज्जनैः ।  
 देयं तथोपनयने विवाहे यत्पुरोदितम् ॥  
 केनचित्कारणेनेह कर्तव्ये विप्रभोजने ।  
 भोजयेत्तु यथाशक्ति परिषत्परिषजनम् ॥ EI. IV p 60,

### ENNĀYIRAM TEMPLE COLLEGE.<sup>1</sup>

#### **The Strength of the College; Subjects Taught :**

At the beginning of the 11th century A. D. there existed a famous and well organised college at Ennāyiram in South Arcott district, which was an educational institution of the modern type, with a staff of sixteen teachers, engaged in teaching a pre-determined curriculum. The local village community had endowed the college with 300 acres of landed property, thus enabling its authorities to offer free tuition, boarding and lodging to 340 students. The admission of students was governed by the principle of the reservation of a fixed number of seats for different subjects. Thus 75 seats were reserved for the R̥gveda and the Black Yajurveda each, 40 seats for the Sāmaveda, 20 for the White Yajurveda, 10 for the Atharvaveda, Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra and Vedānta each, 25 for grammar, 35 for Mīmāṃsā and 40 for *R̥pāvatara* (?). The institution was thus predominantly a Vedic college.

**Number of Teachers :** For the R̥gveda and the black Yajurveda, there were three teachers each, for the Mīmāṃsā two, and for the rest of the subjects one each. There were 16 teachers for 340 students, and so the average number of students per teacher was about 22. Students therefore must have received individual attention and instructions. Big classes like those existing in modern colleges were unknown.

**Maintenance Allowance to Students :** The college supplied free boarding to students, and we have interesting information about the rations allowed per head. Each Vedic student received about one seer of rice per day and this quantity was sufficient for the daily meals. He also received annually an allowance of about one eighth *tola* of gold, which was

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1. S. I. E. R for 1918, p. 145, Inscription No. 333 for 1917



probably intended to cover the clothing expenses. The allowance for the students of grammar and philosophy was about 66 percent higher ; the reason for this preferential treatment is not clear.

**The Salaries of Teachers :** The normal allowance for the teachers of the college was about 16 seers of rice every day. The cost of an ordinary meal was about half a seer of rice ; an ordinary Sanskrit teacher was thus getting as his salary about three times the amount necessary for the food expenses of a family of five. He was thus receiving a salary just sufficient for his normal family responsibilities. He was neither rolling in riches nor suffering from abject poverty. Philosophy ( Vedānta ) was apparently regarded as a difficult subject, for the salary of the teacher of the subject was 25 per cent higher.

#### TIRUMUKKUDAL TEMPLE COLLEGE.<sup>1</sup>

**General Organisation :** During the 11th century, Venkatesh Perumal Temple at Tirumukkudal in Chingleput district was a very interesting institution, for it was running a college, a hostel and a hospital. The College was a smaller institution than the one at Ennāyiram, for arrangement was here made for the free boarding and lodging of 60 students only. Out of the 60 seats in the hostel, 10 were reserved for the students of the Ṛigveda, 10 for those of the Yajurveda, 20 for those of grammar 10 for those of the Pañcha-rātra system, 3 for those of Śaivāgama and 7 for Vānaprasthas and Sanyāsins. All the students in the hostel were provided with oil for bath every Saturday.

**Teachers' Salaries :** The teachers' salaries in this institution were lower than those in the Ennāyiram college. Vedic teachers used to receive only about three seers of rice every day ; their salary was thus

about one fifth the salary that was paid in the Ennāyiram college. Vedic teachers of this institution were apparently part-time teachers ; for their salary is seen to be practically the same as the wages of the servant appointed in the temple hospital for fetching medicinal herbs and preparing medicines. The grammar teacher was apparently a full time employee, for he received about eight seers of rice every day. His pay was thus half the pay of the teacher at Ennāyiram. In ancient as in modern times, salaries of teachers varied with the financial condition of educational institution.

#### TIRUVORRIYUR TEMPLE COLLEGE.

##### **A Grammar College in Memory of Panini :**

During the 13th century there was a big grammar college at Tiruvorriyur in Chingleput district. The college was located in a big hall adjoining the local Śiva temple. There was a tradition current in the locality, that God Śiva had appeared in this very temple before Pāṇini for fourteen continuous days in order to teach him the first fourteen aphorisms ; the village community had therefore organised an efficient grammar college in the Śiva temple to commemorate the event. The college was a much bigger institution than the Ennāyiram college. In the latter place an endowment of 300 acres had enabled the organisers to arrange for the free food and education of 340 students. The Tiruvorriyur college had received an endowment of 400 acres ; we may not be therefore far wrong in assuming that this grammar college must have had more than 450 students on its rolls. The number of teachers was probably about 20 to 25. This college went on performing its functions down to the 14th century; for a record, about a century later

than the previous one, mentions how certain additional taxes were assigned for the upkeep of the grammar college.<sup>1</sup> Details about the management of this college are not available.

### MALKAPURAM TEMPLE COLLEGE.

#### **A Temple, College, Hostel and Hospital combined :**

An inscription from Malkapuram, dated 1268 A. D.<sup>2</sup> reveals the existence of an institution which was a temple, a college, a hostel and a hospital combined. There were eight teachers in the college, four for the Vedas and Āgamas and four for secular subjects consisting of grammar, literature and logic. There was one doctor in charge of the hospital. In the south Indian colleges we have seen so far, there used to be about 20 students on the average under the charge of each teacher. The Malkapuram college therefore had probably about 150 students. They were as usual offered free tuition, boarding, lodging and medicine.

**Teachers' Pay :** Each teacher was given as endowment of two *Puttis* of land. We do not know anything about the net income of this land endowment. The inscription, however, states that the carpenters and drummers of the temple establishment were assigned one *putti* of land for their wages. The teacher's income was thus twice the wages of the skilled artisan. The society was offering him just what was necessary for a decent family life. The salary of the principal was 100 *nishkas* ; it is difficult to assess its real value as the denotation of the term *nishka* at this period is not definitely known.

### SOME OTHER TEMPLE COLLEGES.

#### **Temple Colleges fairly common in south India :**

We have got somewhat detailed information about the

1. Ibid, No. 110 of 1912

2. S. I. E R., for 1917 pp. 122-24.

free Sanskrit colleges that were organised in the five temple establishments mentioned above. There are, however, clear indications that there were many more similar temple colleges in the Deccan in the medieval times (c. 900—1400 A. D.), Thus at Hebbal in Dharwar district there existed a Maṭha in Bhuja-bbeṣvara temple in the 10th century A. D., which had received an endowment of about two hundred acres of land for giving free tuition and boarding to students. About 200 students must have been receiving free education here.<sup>1</sup> At Nagai in Nizam's dominions, there existed a big temple college in the 11th century where two hundred students were instructed in Vedic lore, two hundred in Smṛitis, one hundred in epics, and fifty two in philosophy. The library of the institute employed six librarians.<sup>2</sup> In 1075 A. D., a temple at Bijapur received a big endowment of about 1200 acres of land for providing food and raiments to ascetics and to the pupils of Yogeśvara Paṇḍita, who was conducting a free Mīmāṃsā school there<sup>3</sup>. To judge from the endowment, the college of this Paṇḍita must have been much bigger than that at Ennāyiram. At Managoli in Bijapur district, during the latter half of the 12th century, a local temple used to maintain a grammar school where Kaumāra grammar was taught by a teacher, who was given an endowment of 20 acres of land.<sup>4</sup> At about the same time the Dakṣiṇeśvara temple authorities at Belgamve in Karnatak used to offer free boarding to students studying in the temple school.<sup>5</sup> In 1158 A. D. there flourished at Talgund in Shimoga district a small

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1. E. I. IV. p. 355.

2. Hyd. Arch., S., No. 8, p. 7.

3. L. A., X, pp. 129-31.

4. E. I. V. p. 22.

5. E. C., I. No. 45.

Sanskrit college in the local Prāṇesvara temple, where free food and education was offered to 48 students, studying the Ṛigveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda, Prābhākara-Mīmāṃsā, philosophy ( Vedānta ), linguistics ( Bhāṣya-śāstra ) and Canarese. The institution had employed two cooks to manage the kitchen of the boarding house. At Punnavayil in Tanjore District there existed another grammar college, attached to a local temple and endowed with 400 acres of land. As the endowment for the maintenance of this institution was larger than that enjoyed by the Ennāyiram college, it is quite likely that it may have afforded free education and food to about 500 students.<sup>1</sup> South Indian Inscriptions Nos. 604, 667, 671 and 695 of 1916 record various grants for the salaries of teachers and boarding of students studying in different temple colleges in Tamil country. The last of these records is an interesting one, for it records a donation for a *Sarasvati-bhavana* or library of a temple college in Tinnevely district. These instances of temple authorities organising Sanskrit schools and colleges are typical of the age. Many more must have existed, whose memory has not been handed down to the present times. For, down to the 18th century almost every religious centre in south India used to maintain a Sanskrit school or college. The whole country was in fact studded with them.<sup>2</sup>

**Temple Colleges in northern India :** Instances of temple colleges given above all hail from South India. It is not however correct to suppose that no such institutions existed in north India, because they are not referred to in any north Indian inscriptions. A very large number of north Indian temples have been

1. S. I. E. R. for 1913, pp. 109-110.

2. *Report of the Madras Committee, Education Commission*, 1882, p. 1, foot-note.

destroyed, along with their documents of antiquity, during the Muslim invasions and rule. If all the documents conveying extensive properties to most of the rich temples in north India are recovered, it would almost certainly be found that a considerable portion of the temple property was originally intended for educational purposes. Temple authorities used to discharge their duty to impart education; one of the reasons that impelled Aurangzeb to destroy Hindu temples was the report that Brahmanas of Sindh, Multan and Banaras were using their temples as schools. It is thus clear that in North India also, the important temples were centres of education throughout the middle ages.

### AGRAHĀRA VILLAGES AS CENTRES OF LEARNING.

**What is an Agrahara Village?** On auspicious occasions, kings used to invite learned Brahmanas, settle them in villages and assign their revenues to them for their maintenance. Such villages were called Agrahāra villages, and they naturally became centres of learning where higher education was imparted free in different branches of Sanskrit studies. We shall give here information about two such Agrahāra villages, which were typical of their class.

**Kadiyur Agrahara :** The village of Kadiyur, modern Kalas, in Dharwar district in Karnatak, was made an Agrahāra village in the 10th century by the Rāshṭrakūṭa administration, and assigned to 200 Brahmanas, who were well versed in Vedas, grammar, Purāṇas, logic, works on polity, the science of literary composition and the art of writing commentaries.<sup>1</sup> The village was famous as an efficient centre of education and its Brahmana residents naturally were proud of its

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1. *E, I, XIII*, p. 317.

reputation. It may be pointed out that the educational activity of this Brahmana centre was not confined to the Vedic studies only; poetics, grammar, logic, purāṇas and the political science were included in the curriculum. An endowment had been also received for the salaries of some teachers. A free feeding house was maintained in the village; it was most probably intended for the poor students studying in the local institution.

**Sarvajñapura Agrahāra :** Sarvajñapura (modern Arsikere in Hassan District, Mysore) was another Agrahāra village, which, as its name would indicate, was a famous centre of learning. An inscription discovered at this place gives us a graphic description of its literary and pedagogic activities. "In some of its streets the Brahmanas were reading the Vedas, Śāstras and six systems of philosophy; every group of Brahmanas was either reading the Vedas or engaged in listening to the exposition of some higher science, or carrying on ceaseless discussion on logic, or joyously reciting the Purāṇas or settling the meaning of the Smṛitis, drama or poetry. All the Brahmanas of Sarvajñapura were devoted to study, teaching and listening to the dictates of religion and morality."<sup>1</sup>

**Numerous Centres of higher Education :** The above two Agrahāra villages were but typical of their class. As a rule in every Agrahāra village free instructions were given in different branches of Sanskrit learning by the Brahmana donees in return for the provision made for their livelihood by the state or society.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes non-Agrahāra villages also

1. E. C., V., p. 144.

2. fO. एतेषु किलाग्रहारेषु केचिज्जपन्ति । अपरे पाठयन्ति । केचित्पठन्ति । अन्ये तत्त्वविद्यामुपदिशन्ति । इतरे अध्यापयन्ति । पश्य पश्य ।—Keralābharanam

like Bāhur, 15 miles south of Pondichery, were important centres of higher education receiving grants of the revenues of several villages because they were famous centres of well-known scholars, hailing from all parts of the country.<sup>1</sup> Agrahāra villages and endowed temples and monasteries were fairly numerous in ancient India ; there used to be at least two or three of them in an area equal to the modern district. We may therefore well conclude that centres for higher education were as numerous in medieval times (c. 600-1300 A. D.) than they are today in modern India.

**Tols :** Before concluding this chapter, it will be necessary to refer to Tols or Sanskrit schools which are still fairly numerous in Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. From very early times, Tols have enjoyed grants of land, on which their teachers and pupils subsisted. These grants were augmented in value and new ones were created when the Zemindars felt themselves secure by the Permanent Settlement of Cornwallis.<sup>2</sup> Where there was no specific endowment, the village Pandit used to arrange for the free boarding, lodging and clothing of his students by collecting the necessary funds by raising subscriptions at chief fairs and festivals, and from rich charitable persons. Tols thus are a variety of the *Agrahāra* type of educational institutions.

The classes are usually held in a thatched house. As a rule, each Tol enrolls about 25 students, who are accommodated in mud huts built round the school house. Study courses usually extend over six to eight years and enable the students to appear for the Praveśika or Admission examination in Sanskrit.

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1. E. L. XVIII, p. 14.

2. Report of the Bengal Provincial Committee. Education Commission, 1882.



**Tradition of free Education :** It is indeed noteworthy that such tradition of free education should have persisted inspite of foreign rule of several centuries. Learned Brahmanas in India have always been anxious to impart education free to deserving students irrespective of their own financial condition. This tradition exists even today in ancient centres of Sanskrit education like Banaras, Nasik, Wai and Nadia. The conclusion therefore seems to be irresistible that in the ancient and medieval period of Indian history, every student, howsoever poor he may have been, could get the highest education free, provided he was willing, if necessary, to do some household or farm work for his teacher. Poor parents had not to worry about the educational expenses ; their sons could either find admission to free boarding houses or maintain themselves by begging their food daily, which was regarded as the most honorable means of livelihood for the student.

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## Chapter VI

### HIGHER LITERARY EDUCATION.

#### **Curriculum, method of teaching and examinations.**

Subjects and methods of study in the early Vedic period-and in the later Vedic period-The method of study changes at C. 1000 B. C.-New topics of study-Combination of liberal and useful education-Vedic studies in the 1st millennium A.D.—An age of specialisation-Ascendancy of Sanskrit-Courses in grammar, astrology, literature, Smṛitis, Purāṇas, logic and philosophy-Courses for laymen and monks in Buddhist colleges-Selection of text-books.

Method of teaching and study-Books normally not available, hence the oral method of instruction-Importance of recitation and recapitulation Texts memorised but not crammed-Great importance attached to exposition and debate-Individual attention-Help of monitors-No annual or final examination-No degrees and diplomas Competitive element kept within limit.

**Introductory :** The history of ancient Indian education is spread over several millennia and we therefore naturally find considerable changes taking place in the curricula in the course of centuries. This is but natural; for the curriculum is intimately connected with the achievements and aspirations of a people. When the outlook on life changes or when new branches of knowledge are developed, extensive changes become inevitable in the curriculum followed in schools and colleges. The truth of this observation will be illustrated by the extensive changes that have taken place in our Primary, Secondary and Higher Education since the achievement of Freedom in 1947. In the present chapter, we shall indicate the main topics of study on the literary side, point out the changes in the curricula that took place in the different ages, discuss the methods of study and teaching and ascertain what importance was attached to examinations.

**EARLY VEDIC AGE ( C. upto 1500 B. C. )**

**Subjects of study :** The Vedic literature naturally

formed the main topic of study in this period. Besides the sacred hymns, there were also some historical poems, ballads and hero-songs<sup>1</sup> in existence, which were also committed to memory by the young scholars of the day, as they often helped the elucidation of some references contained in the Vedic hymns. Students were required to master the principles of prosody and encouraged to develop the powers of versification. Those who intended to follow the priestly profession had to study the details of the rituals associated with the hymns they had committed to memory. The study of elementary geometry, the knowledge of which was necessary for the proper construction of sacrificial altars, was also included in the Vedic course. A knowledge of astronomy, which had enabled the age to find out the difference between the lunar and solar months, was also imparted. Grammar and etymology did not trouble the student of this age because they were yet to be developed. Vedic studies usually began at about the age of nine or ten and Initiation Ceremony known as Upanayana was performed at their commencement. The nature, details, and educational significance of this ceremony will be found discussed in Appendix I, B.

**The Method of study :** Vedic hymns were studied in this period as specimens of literature to be understood, appreciated, imitated and even excelled if possible. New hymns<sup>2</sup> were being composed and the authors of some of them claimed that they were superior to

1. Itihāsa, Purāṇa, and Nārāyaṇī Gāthās are mentioned as early as *Atharvaveda*. XV, 1.

2. The very second stanza of the *Rigveda*, for instance, refers to the earlier and later poets of the Vedic collection, cf. अग्निः पूर्वभिर्ऋषिभिरीड्यो नूतनैर्वा उत । I, 1, 2.

the compositions of the earlier poets.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that some of the poems of the later poets were selected for inclusion in the Vedic collection when it was made in a subsequent age. As new hymns were being composed by contemporary authors, it is but natural that they were not yet regarded as revealed. It was therefore not at all felt necessary that they should be committed to memory so meticulously as not to render possible a single mistake of accent or intonation. Professional priests must of course have committed the hymns very thoroughly to memory in order to ensure facility in their use during the performance of the different rituals. But the mass of people consisting of the warriors, agriculturists and artisans used to learn by heart only some select Vedic hymns, and these too in the same way in which the songs of medieval saints are memorised by the Hindu masses today. More effort was made to understand the meaning of the hymns than to remember their exact wording.

### LATER VEDIC AGE.

( C. 1500 to 1000 B. C. )

**The Subjects of Study:** The mass of the vedic hymns was classified in this period and as a result the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, came into existence. This led to specialisation in Vedic studies and facilitated the growth of a new type of literature, known as Brahmana literature, which devoted itself to the exposition of a number of important dogmas, theories and practices connected with Vedic sacrifices.

1. नवं नु स्तोममग्नये दिवःश्येनाय जीजनम् । वस्वः कुविद्वनाति नः ॥

V. 15, 4.

Cf. also R. V. VII 35 ; 14 ; III. 32. 15.

Sacrificial rituals became very complex and complicated in this period and the professional priests had to devote several years in mastering their details and intricacies. The study of astronomy, geometry and prosody continued to progress in this period. the development of the sciences of grammar and etymology started in this age and manuals on these subjects were included in the curriculum.

**The Method of Study :** The current spoken Sanskrit was becoming gradually differentiated from the Vedic language and it was felt that the sacred literature should be preserved in its pristine form and purity, and should not be allowed to change with the spoken idiom. Vedic scholars of this period began to insist that Vedic hymns should be carefully committed to memory in their precise traditional intonation and accents. Students were not at liberty to change a difficult archaic word for a simple current one. The differentiation of the spoken dialect from the Vedic language raised new problems of interpretation and the age sought to solve them by preparing a list of difficult Vedic words and expressions, which were carefully expounded to students. Vedic students were expected not only to memorise the Vedic hymns but also to explain their meaning. Ridicule was poured on them if they failed to expound what they had learnt by heart.<sup>1</sup> Learned discussions were a normal and important feature of the student life and young scholars were very anxious to come out successful in them.<sup>2</sup>

1. स्याणुरयं भारहारः किलाभूदधीत्य वेदं न विजानाति योऽर्थम् ।

*Nir* I, 18. See also, *ibid.* 1. 19.

2. A. V. VII. 12, 13; II. 27.

## THE AGE OF THE UPANISHADS AND THE SŪTRAS.

(First millennium B. C.)

**Vedic Studies ; Method changed :** The Vedic literature began to be universally regarded as revealed to this period and that honour was gradually extended to the Brāhmaṇas<sup>1</sup> and the Upanishads also. Vedic schools had to perform the onerous task of preserving this great and growing literature. The art of writing was known by this time, but its aid was not taken for this purpose, as it was believed that it would be irreligious to do so.<sup>2</sup> The theory that the slightest mistake in the recitation of the Vedic hymns would not only prevent the realisation of the expected reward, but would also bring about a disaster on the reciter<sup>3</sup>, gained ground in this period and necessitated the devotion of a large part of the energy of the rising generation to the task of the accurate memorising of the Vedic literature. Extraordinary precautions were taken to prevent the corruption of the Vedic text by devising the *pada-pāṭha*,<sup>4</sup> *krama-pāṭha*, *jaṭā-pāṭha*

The prose literature devoted to the task of explaining the rituals, legends and knotty points about the sacrifices enjoined in the Vedic hymns was known by this name. It should not be mistaken with the members of the Brahman caste.

2. Cf. वेदानां लेखकाश्चैव सर्वे निरयगामिनः । XIV 106. 92.

3. मन्त्रो हीनः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा मिथ्याप्रयुक्तो न तमर्थमाह ।

स वाग्वज्रो यजमानं हिनस्ति यथेन्द्रशत्रुः स्वरतोऽपराधात् ।

*Pāṇinīśikshā*, v. 52,

4. The *pada-pāṭha* required the students to memorise each word in the Vedic hymns separately after restoring it to its original form. Supposing a, b and c were the three opening words of a hymn, the *krama-pāṭha* recited them as ab, bc, etc., *jaṭā-pāṭha* as ab, ba, ab, etc., and the *ghana-pāṭha* as ab, ba, abc cba, abc. The reader will now get some idea of the onerousness of the task of memorising

and *ghana-pāṭha*, and all these had to be committed to memory by those who desired to be regarded as expert in the Vedic lore. This further increased the burden on the memory. As centuries rolled on, it became more and more difficult for the Vedic expert to memorise this extensive and growing literature and also to understand its meaning: for the spoken dialect was becoming more and more differentiated from the Vedic language. It was therefore decided towards the end of this period that some Vedic scholars should devote their energies to the mechanical memorising of this extensive literature with a view to prevent its loss, while others should address themselves to the problem of its interpretation by studying commentaries, etymology, lexicography, etc. But for this differentiation of function, the extensive Vedic literature could not have been preserved for posterity. This arrangement no doubt exposed some Brahmanas to the taunt of being more parrot-like reciters of the Vedic hymns. It is gratifying to find that they did not mind it in the wider interest of the preservation of the national literature and culture.

**New Topics of Study:** The period under review was the most creative era in the history of the Hindu intellect; it recorded remarkable achievements in the realm of philosophy, sacred law, epic literature, philology, grammar, astronomy and several fine and useful arts like sculpture, medicine and shipbuilding. On the one hand the development of these branches naturally created a new fascination for the students of the age, and on the other, the rise of the protestant movements led by the Upanishadic, Jain and Buddhist thinkers told on the popularity of the Vedic religion and literature. The current language had now become very widely differentiated from the

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these, *pāṭhas*. Students studying *Padapāṭha* were called *Padikas*, and *Kramapāṭha* *Kramikas*.

Vedic idiom and thus created a new difficulty in the Vedic studies. As a combined consequence of all these factors, Vedic studies fell into background towards the end of this period and greater attention began to be paid to the cultivation of the new branches of learning referred to above.

### **Combination of Liberal and Useful Education :**

Several references in the contemporary literature indicate that an attempt was made in this period to combine liberal with professional or useful education. Graduates of this age are usually described as well versed in the Vedas as well as in eighteen *śiṃṣas*,<sup>1</sup> i.e., practical arts and sciences. These latter included archery, military art, medicine, magic, snake charming, conveyancing, administrative training, music, dancing, painting, engineering, etc.<sup>2</sup> It is of course clear that no graduate could get mastery in all the Vedas as well as in all the *śiṃṣas* as is suggested by some passage ; it is however clear from some references in Jātakas that literary education was combined with one of the useful professions referred to above in the famous centres of education like Taxila. This practice enabled the average literary student to stand on his own legs.

## **THE AGE OF THE SMṚITIS, PURĀṆAS AND NIBANDHAS.**

( 1st century A. D. to c. 1200 A. D. )

**Vedic Studies :** The Vedic studies fell further into background during this period. A sufficient number of Brahmanas however was always available to preserve and transmit the Vedic literature to generations unborn. They used to do their work very thoroughly, for the experts among them would memorise not only

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1. *Chh. Up.* VII. 1. 2. *Mil. p.* Vol. I. p. 247

2. See Appendix IV for the explanation of this term.



the Vedic hymns, but also their *pāda-pāṭha*, *krama-pāṭha*, *jaṭa-pāṭha* and *ghana-pāṭha*.<sup>1</sup> They used to master the details connected with the numerous Vedic sacrifice also. Some of them used to study two, three or even four Vedas and were therefore known as Dvivedins, Trivedins and Chaturvedins respectively. Many donees of the copperplate grants of this period bear these surnames; they could have become eligible for them only by prolonged and almost life-long devotion to the cause of Vedic studies. This devotion was almost tragic; it did not bring any adequate pecuniary compensation, and required them to memorise texts, which not they, but others could understand and expound. The number of the Vedic scholars, devoting themselves to the task of interpreting and expounding Vedic hymns, dwindled down very considerably during this period. Vedic studies therefore usually meant the mere cramming of the sacred texts and were often commented upon very adversely by some writers of the age, some of whom went to the extent of declaring that the intellect is deadened and rendered useless by the parrot-like cramming of the Vedic hymns.<sup>2</sup> Kings of this age were more disposed to extend their patronage to poets, who could compliment them by composing neat poems in their honour,<sup>3</sup> than to Vedic Brahmanas, who could

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1. See *ante*, p. 146-149

2. नानुवाकहता बुद्धिर्व्यवहारक्षमा भवेत् ।

अनुवाकहता या तु न सा सर्वत्रगामिनी ॥ Śukra, III. 261

3. The Vedic—Brahmanas are sarcastically described by the door-keepers of king Bhoja as follows:—राजमाषनिभैर्दन्तैः कटिविन्यस्तपाणयः । द्वारि तिष्ठन्ति राजेन्द्र छान्दसाः श्लोकशत्रवः ॥ They complain to Kālidāsa about their neglect as follows:—अस्मिन्कं समयवेदविदामपि भोजः किमपि नार्पयति । भवादृशां हि यथेष्टं दत्ते । ततोऽस्माभिः कवित्वविधानधियात्रागतम् ॥ Kālidāsa then helps them. *Bhojoprobandha*, v. 86 and following.

recite hymns, which neither they themselves nor their hearers could understand. New branches of learning like philosophy and *belles lettres* also appealed more powerfully to the intellect and emotions of the rising generation. In spite of these adverse and discouraging factors Vaidika Brahmanas continued to address themselves to the almost thankless task of memorising the vast Vedic literature, which could not have been preserved but for their devotion to duty.

**An Age of Specialisation :** We have already mentioned the new branches of study that came into prominence during the preceding period. The present age made its own contribution to the march of knowledge by further developing astronomy, astrology, poetics, classical Sanskrit literature, Dharmaśāstra ( sacred and secular law ), logic, and the different systems of orthodox and heterodox philosophy. As the help of paper, printing and cheap books was not available for the preservation and propagation of knowledge, the age naturally emphasised on specialisation, which gave a great impetus to the development of the different branches of knowledge.

**The Ascendancy of Sanskrit :** During the earlier centuries of this period upto c. 300 A. D., some kings like the Śātavāhanas, the Ikshvākus and the Pallavas had championed the cause of Prakrit and directed that vernaculars alone should be used even in their official and public documents. As however the period advanced, the attraction of Sanskrit became so irresistible that some kings like the Guptas went to the extent of ordering the use of that language even in their harems.<sup>1</sup> Prakrits ceased to be used for public documents and even the Buddhists

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1. *Kāvyaīmānsā*, p. 0.

and the Jains disregarded the advice of the founders of their religions and began to compose works in Sanskrit. The revival of Sanskrit during this period produced results more or less similar to those brought about in Europe by the discovery and study of the classics during the time of the Renaissance. All the attention of the educated classes was devoted to the cultivation of Sanskrit. This led to the neglect of vernaculars through which alone the masses could be approached. This eventually tended to confine education only to higher classes.

**Preliminary Sanskrit Course :** The study of the different branches of knowledge that were flourishing in this age was preceded by a preliminary course in Sanskrit. After the Upanayana ceremony at about the age of 8, all students used to memorise a few important Vedic hymns necessary for their daily or ceremonial needs. Then they used to devote four or five years to the study of elementary Sanskrit grammar and literature. At about the age of 13 or 14, the student used to be able to understand Sanskrit works on subjects like logic, philosophy, poetics, astronomy and mathematics. He then used to select one of these subjects for specialisation and devote about ten years to its study.

**Popularity of Grammar and Astrology :** Among the subjects cultivated during this period, the courses of advanced grammar and astronomy-cum-astrology were very popular, as attested to both by Yuan Chwang and Alberuni. The demand for experts in grammar was as keen during this age as the demand for the teachers trained in English was under the British rule. Every school for higher education had to engage several grammarians in order to give the necessary instructions in Sanskrit language, which was the key subject. The age believed in astrology and astrologers were

in great demand throughout the country for preparing and interpreting almanacs and prognosticating future events. The royal courts also used to have a royal astrologer.

**The Course in Sanskrit Literature :** The students of this subject were naturally required first to complete their course in grammar and *koṣha* ( vocabulary ) and then enjoined a study of some famous authors like Kālidāsa, Bhārṭṛihari or Bāṇa. Particular attention was paid to prosody and poetics, and students were expected not only to understand the classical authors, but also to compose fairly good verses imitating their style. In order to get a general knowledge of the culture of the race, they were also required to study the epics, the Purāṇas and traditional stories. The Sanskrit composition that became popular was highly florid and artificial in style; it was full of puns, alliterations and figures of speech, as is shown by the works of later Sanskrit poets as also by inscriptions and copper plates composed after c. 400 A. D. Students were further trained to be good debaters; the ability to defend one's own position in learned assemblies and the capacity to compose nice verses in a very short time were regarded as the most important criteria of good scholarship.

**The Courses in Smṛitis and Purāṇas :** Almost as popular as the courses in grammar and astrology were the courses in Purāṇas and Smṛitis whose hold over the popular mind during this age was almost as great as that of the Vedic literature in the earlier periods. Popular Hindu religion has greatly changed its complexion during this period and its theories and practices could be ascertained only from Smṛitis and Purāṇas, which therefore had to be mastered even by the village priest. The courses in these subjects prescribed a good mastery of Sanskrit grammar and classical Sanskrit literature and a special study of select Sūtras, Smṛitis and Purāṇas. More emphasis was laid on understanding the meaning of the

works concerned than on committing them to memory. Usually the students of Smṛitis and Purāṇas took the help of a manuscript when expounding their contents; there was no prejudice against utilising the art of writing for preserving them, as there was for preserving the Vedic literature.

**Courses in Logic and Philosophy:** The age we are reviewing was reverberating with controversies among the followers of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Within the fold of Hinduism itself, the followers of Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta were contending for supremacy. It was but natural that these controversies should have given an impetus to the study of metaphysics. After getting a preliminary grounding in grammar and literature, the students of the subject used to select one of the systems of philosophy for specialisation and master its most advanced and difficult works. The study of philosophy presupposed a study of logic during this period; so students of philosophy used to devote considerable time to the study of logic also. The young graduate in philosophy was however expected not only to expound and defend his own system but also to attack and refute those of his opponents. The course therefore included a comparative study of the contending systems of metaphysics. Hindu philosophers like Gaudapāda and Śaṅkarāchārya and Buddhist scholars like Vasubandhu and Dharmakīrti used to master the systems of their opponents as well. In a famous philosophical college situated in a sylvan retreat in the Vindhya mountain presided over by Divākarasena, a Brahmana convert to Buddhism, students of Hinduism, Buddhism and Svetāmbara and Digambara Jainism studied together

side by side under the same principal.<sup>1</sup> Such an arrangement naturally presupposes a comparative study of the rival systems leading to the broadening of the outlook and the deepening of the scholarship of the average student of the institution.

**Courses for Laymen in Buddhist Colleges :** Buddhist monastic colleges began to take up the education of the laymen also from about the beginning of the Christian era. The courses prescribed for them were not radically different from those obtaining under sister institutions working under the aegis of Hinduism. Students started with a study of Sanskrit grammar and literature, which lasted for seven or eight years. They were also given some grounding in Pāli ; as pious Buddhists, they had to master some passages from the Pāli canon. At about the age of 15 or 16, their higher education commenced. Those who wanted to specialise in Sanskrit literature, Dharmaśāstra, astrology cum-astronomy, medicine or works on polity and administration used to follow practically the same course as was in vogue in the Hindu colleges of the period. Those however who wanted to specialise in logic or philosophy used to select works by Buddhist authors on these subjects like Hetuvidyā, Abhidharmaśāstra, Nyāyānusāraśāstra, etc. The followers of the Hīnayāna school used to specialise in Tripiṭakas and other early works of orthodox Buddhism, whereas those of the Mahāyāna school used to study the works of their famous scholars like Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu and Dharmakīrti. Besides mastering their own works on philosophy, the Buddhist scholars used to study Hindu works on metaphysics as well.

**Courses for Monks ;** The curriculum prescribed for the monk scholar was naturally somewhat

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1 *Harshacharita*; Chap. VIII,

different. It did not include any special study of secular sciences like poetics, literature or astrology, but was concerned principally with theological subjects. For ten years after his admission as a novice, the monk-student was under the direct guidance and control of his preceptor, who used to initiate him in the study of Pāli and Sanskrit. When these languages were properly mastered, a thorough study of the sacred texts (the Tripīṭakas), was started. When this was over relatively recent works on Buddhist religion and philosophy were mastered. Hindu systems of religion, logic and philosophy were then carefully studied in order to meet the Hindu opponent on his own ground. It is interesting to note that Yuan Chwang, who had undertaken the arduous and perilous journey to India primarily for studying Buddhist scriptures, spent two fifth the period of his stay in India in studying Sanskrit works on Hindu philosophy. The education of the novice did not terminate with his admission to the Order as a full-fledged monk. For, the Buddhist monk was expected to be a lifelong student like the Hindu Naishṭhika Brahmachārin.

**Selection of Text-books :** We have no definite information about the text-books prescribed for the various courses in different institutions during different centuries. These must have gone on changing in course of time when better and more up-to-date books written by competent authorities became available. The selection of text books was usually governed by consideration of merit alone. An author had to submit his work to a synod of scholars at a famous centre of learning like Pāṭliputra or Banaras<sup>1</sup>, and if it was

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1. Pānini is reported to have come all the way to Pāṭliputra from Sālātura near Peshawar in order to get his famous grammar approved by the synod at that famous capital, Śankarāchārya came to Banaras from Malabar in order to seek the imprimatur of the Pandits of that place over his philosophical works.

found to be a work of merit by that body, it received its imprimatur which helped its acceptance and spread in provincial towns. It should however be noted that no pecuniary gain was likely to accrue to an author by his book being prescribed in several institutions ; for there was no press and copyright in ancient India. The adoption of a work as a text-book in the schools of a province however increased the reputation of its author and we sometimes find grateful royal pupils like king Siddharāja of Gujarat appointing 300 clerks to copy works like Siddhahema grammar of their preceptors like Hemachandra in order to present them to the different centres of learning for being adopted as text books. Sometimes however preceptors of royal pupils adopted more questionable means to get their books accepted. Ugrabhūti, the teacher of king Ananagapāla of the Punjab ( c. 1010—c. 1020 ) is said to have induced his royal pupil to distribute two lakhs of *dirhams* (=about Rs. 60,000) among the Pandits of Kashmir in order to overcome successfully their reluctance to accept his new work on grammar called *Śishya-hitā-vṛitti*<sup>1</sup>. Such cases however were probably few. Usually books prescribed in a particular school were those in vogue at the centre where the principal and teachers of the school were educated. Hindus, Buddhists and Jains would often prefer works written by authors of their own persuasion in the case of a subject like logic, which was cultivated by all schools.

**The role of Libraries :** In the modern age of paper and press, libraries play a vital role not only in higher education but also in the spread of knowledge among the masses. The conditions were quite different in the ancient period, when books were written on birch and plam leaves and were fragile and very costly. Books in that age adorned the 'necks' of learning men and not

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1. Sachau, Alberuni, Vol. I, pp. 125-8.



the shelves of libraries. Many sacred works like the Vedas, the Tripiṭakas and the Aṅgas were not committed to writing for a long time. In the course of time as the literature became very extensive, it became clear that human memory alone could not be trusted to preserve it. Libraries began to spring into existence in important centres of education like Nālandā, Valabhi etc., as already pointed out in chap. V. Some temple colleges also began to organise them. Purāṇas declare that the gift of a book, which had to be copied out in those days, was of peculiarly high merit. Many of the Buddhist Vihāras and Jain Maṭhas had their own libraries. These days libraries were not merely store houses of books, but also their publication agencies. They used to supply books to outsiders, not only lending out their volumes, but also by getting them copied through clerks specially maintained for the purpose. Apart from monasteries and Maṭhas, kings also used to evince interest in maintaining libraries. King Kumārapāla of Gujarat is said to have spent huge amounts of money in establishing 21 libraries in his kingdom. The Sarasvatībhavana library, founded and maintained by the Maratha rulers of Tanjore, has a large number of important works. In medieval India most of the learned Pandit families had their small collection of books. Public libraries were however few. *Pushkara-smahitā*, a Pañcharātra work, gives interesting details about the methods of copying and preserving books in libraries.

#### METHOD OF TEACHING AND STUDY.

**General Condition of the Times :** Before describing and commenting upon the method of teaching and study current in ancient India, it is necessary that we should familiarise ourselves with the general conditions of the age. In the beginning the art of writing was unknown, and even when it was invented, it was not utilised for preserving and transmitting the

Vedic literature, which for several centuries was the main topic of the study. It was further held as imperatively necessary that the canonical literature should be memorised in the most meticulous way; there should be no possibility of the mistake even of a single accent. The service of the art of writing was no doubt utilised for preserving and teaching non-Vedic literature, but owing to the absence of paper and printing, books could be within the reach of the rich only. Being written on birch leaves, they were fragile as well as costly. The average student could therefore not have his own copy of the text-book;<sup>1</sup> even the desire to possess one was regarded as a symptom of indolence.<sup>2</sup> Under such circumstances, extensive use of a library was altogether impracticable, nor could the help of visual instruction through the help of charts and pictures be possible. Oral instruction was the only available method of teaching and it was the cheapest and the most accurate.

**Method of Teaching in the Vedic Schools :** Education therefore was for a long time imparted through the oral lesson, without the medium of a book. This method persisted in the Vedic schools down to recent times. The teacher used to pronounce only two words of the Vedic stanza at a time, which the student was asked to recite with exact intonation and accent. The number of words was reduced to one, if the expression happened to be a compound one.<sup>3</sup> If the student had any difficulty in the

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1. गीती शीघ्री शिरःकंपी तथा लिखितपाठकः ।

अनर्थज्ञोऽल्पकण्ठश्च षडेते पाठकाधमाः ॥

*a-śikṣha*, 32

2. द्यूतं पुस्तकशुश्रूषा नाटकासक्तिरेव च ।

स्त्रियस्तन्त्री च निद्रा च विद्याविघ्नकराणि षट् ॥

Nārada in S. G. S. p. 52

3. *Rik-prāṭiśākhya*, Paṭala, XV

matter, it was explained to him. When a whole verse was thus taught to one student, he was dismissed and the same process was repeated with the next one. Necessarily every student used to receive individual attention under this system. The method of teaching was direct and personal and not even a text-book intervened between the teacher and the student.

### **Method of Teaching in non-Vedic Schools :**

The above method of teaching was extensively followed in other branches of learning also, no doubt with suitable modifications, when it was deemed necessary that certain texts should be memorised by the student. Small portions of the text were recited and explained by the teacher to the students; when they had understood them, each one was required to commit them to memory. It was in this way that students used to learn important books like the grammar of Pāṇini, the dictionary of Amara, the law-book of Manu or the work on poetics by Mammata, which had to be committed to memory. Books being both costly and fragile, there was no other efficient alternative method of study, if it was desired that students should acquire a mastery in their subjects, which should stand them in good stead throughout their lives. Learning in ancient times had to be at the tip of the tongue; a scholar asking for time to consult his notes or books could carry no prestige.<sup>1</sup> The highest ambition of an author of even the 12th century A. D., was, not that his work may adorn the shelves of the libraries of the learned, but that it

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1. पुस्तकस्था तु या विद्या परहस्तगतं धनम् ।

कार्यकाले समुत्पन्ने न सा विद्या न तद्धनम् ॥

may shine as an ornament on their neck, i. e., it should be memorised by them.<sup>1</sup>

**Importance of Recitation and Recapitulation :**

Recitation and recapitulation therefore formed an important part in the daily routine of the student life. The home-work, which the student did in his spare time, did not consist of written exercises ; it merely amounted to the recitation and recapitulation of lessons learnt already. Every day students were required to spend a part of their time in the school in jointly reciting a portion of the work they had committed to memory. As a result of this training, the memory of the average student in ancient India was very highly developed ; he could perform feats of memorising which now we may regard as impossible. I-tsing rather obscurely refers to certain interesting aids to memory owing to which, after the practice of ten or fifteen days, the student felt 'his thoughts, rising like a fountain and could commit to memory whatever he had but once heard.' 'This is far from a myth,' says the Chinese traveller, 'for I have myself met such men.' In an age when books were very rare, it was but meet that great emphasis should have been laid on the development of memory.

**Special Devices to help the Memory :** Though the memory of the average student was much better trained and developed than is the case now, the authors and educationalists left no stone unturned to lighten its burden. Ancient Indian educationalists had realised that rhyme makes an appeal to æsthetic sensibility

1. तेन प्रीत्या विरचितमिदं काव्यमव्याजकान्तं ।

कण्ठाटिन्दोर्जगति विदुषां कण्ठभूषात्वमेयात् ।

*Vikramāṅkadevacharit*, XVIII 102

2. P. 183.

and facilitates the task of memorising. They therefore decided to utilise its help in the teaching work by composing text books in verse. Even dictionaries and elementary books on grammar were composed in verse. The development of the Sutra style, where conclusions are stated in short and pithy sentences, is also due to the exigencies of the schools and colleges, the students of which had to rely more on their memory than on books and notes for recalling the contents of the works once studied by them.

**Erroneous impression about Cramming :** The fact that the modern Vedic Pandit does not know the meaning of the hymns he recites with flawless accuracy, has led to an erroneous impression that mere cramming was encouraged by the ancient Indian educational system. Such however was not the case. We have already shown how for many centuries even Vedic scholars could expound the meaning of the hymns they had committed to memory ; it was owing to the growth of the Vedic literature and the imperative necessity of committing the whole of it to memory, that it was reluctantly decided to assign the memorising of the Vedic texts to one section of Brahmanas and their exposition to another. It had become humanly impossible to expect both the tasks to be done by the same individual.

**The Place of Exposition in Teaching ;** It is no doubt true that some Sūtra works like those on grammar and philosophy, which were committed to memory, are so cryptic as to be mostly unintelligible by themselves. They were written in that style merely to lighten the burden on the student's memory. Their teaching was accompanied by extensive lectures, some of which used to be later embodied in commentaries. The teaching of the important works on

philosophy, logic and poetics was hardly possible without exhaustive discussion pertaining to the views expounded and controverted. In these discussions there was an unravelling of the subject matter, distinctions and contra-distinctions were drawn, and an effort was made to show the reasonableness of one's position and the errors of the opponent.<sup>1</sup> The students of the various schools of orthodox and heterodox systems of religion and philosophy reading under Divākarasena used to listen to the exposition of their respective systems, deliberate on their natures, discuss their features, raise doubts on obscure themes, determine for themselves the main outlines and enter into discussion with the opponents<sup>2</sup>. The same procedure must have been followed in other colleges of philosophy. Reasoning and analysis formed the crux of the method of study and teaching. The medium of instruction in higher studies was naturally Sanskrit; when however Prakrits and vernaculars developed, their help was also occasionally taken<sup>3</sup>.

**Testimony of Chinese Pilgrims :** Indian teachers were past masters in the art of explanation and exposition; students from distant countries like Korea and China used to brave the dangers of the perilous journey to India, not because they wanted to learn by rote the scriptures of their religion, but because they were anxious to hear the exposition of obscure metaphysical passages which could be heard nowhere else. What Yuan Chwang valued in his Indian teachers was not their capacity to recite the sacred

1. *Mil. Pan.* Vol. I. p. 46.

2. *Harshacharit*, Chap. VIII.

3. संस्कृतैः प्राकृतैर्वाच्यैर्यः शिष्यमनुरूपतः ।

देशभाषाद्युपायैश्च बोधयेत्स गुरुः स्मृतः ॥

Vishnūdharmā quoted by V. M. S., p. 72 (Jivānand's edition)

texts, but their remarkable ability in explaining obscure passages and offering illuminative suggestions on doubtful points.<sup>1</sup> About his Indian *gurus*, I-tsing says, 'I have been always very glad that I had an opportunity of acquiring knowledge from them personally, *which I should otherwise have never possessed*'.<sup>2</sup>

**The Place of Debates :** Since early times, debates and discussion have always played an important part in the literary training of students. The Vedic literature refers to such literary combats and describes how the victors were suitably honoured ( *R. U.*, X 71 ). This Vedic tradition continued throughout the later history. *Śāstrārthas* or learned debates were constantly held in colleges where students of literature, poetics, philosophy and logic were called upon to defend their own propositions and attack those of their opponents. The training in debates made students ready-witted and developed their powers of speech.

**Other Devices in Teaching :** The use of parables was often made in expounding obscure principles, as would appear from the plot of the *Hitopadeśa* and the *Pañchatantra*, where principles of politics are taught under the guise of telling stories about animals. The dialogue method was followed by many a philosopher, as would appear from the evidence of the Upanishads and the Buddhist *Sūtras*.<sup>3</sup> It enabled the teacher to ascertain the reactions in the student's mind to his own observations. The value of comparison and observation was also realised by many teachers who

1. Beal *Life*, pp. 76, 154, 160

2. P, 185.

3. It is interesting to note that many of the commentaries are in the form of a dialogue between the teacher and the student. The earlier part advances a view such as a student may be, expected to hold as plausible, the later part contains its correction or refutation, as may be done by a teacher in his lecture:

used to develop the power of understanding of dull students by asking them to carefully observe new facts and compare them with those already known.<sup>1</sup>

**Individual Attention :** We have already shown at pp. 84-5 how the classes in ancient India were usually small ones, consisting of not more than 15 or 20 students. It was therefore possible to give individual attention to each student. This was one of the strongest points in the ancient Indian system of education. Lectures to large classes of 100 or 200 students, which are unintelligible to some, superfluous to others and partially useful to the rest, were unknown in ancient India. Students could not afford to go to the class room without thorough preparation. There was a daily examination of every student and no new lesson was given until the old one was thoroughly mastered.<sup>2</sup> Teachers used to suspend further lessons in the case of those students who were discovered to have forgotten some of the portion done earlier.<sup>3</sup> There were no annual examinations and mass promotions at fixed intervals. Clever students were not compelled to mark time for their dull companions as under the modern system of education. The educational system ministered to the need and individual capacity of each student. If a student was intelligent and industrious, he could finish his education much earlier than is possible in modern times. The idle and careless student had not as pleasant a prospect of a merry college life as he has in the present age. Yuan Chwang says, 'When disciples, intelligent and accute, are addicted to idle shirking, teachers doggedly persevere in repeating

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1. Jātaka No. 124

2. *Mil. Pan.*, I, p. 18.

3. अप्रतिभायां यावन्तं कालं न वेद तावन्तं कालं तदधीयत ।



instruction until their training is finished'.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese traveller was very favourably impressed by the capacity of Indian teachers to rouse their students to activity and urge them to progress.

**Monitorial System :** In order to make personal supervision effective, the cooperation and help of advanced students were enlisted in the cause of education. They used to guide the studies of the juniors under the general supervision of their teachers. Āpastamba lays down that such senior students were to be respected in the same way as the teacher.<sup>2</sup> About the Valabhi college students, I-tsing observes that they used to pass two or three years, 'instructed by their teachers and instructing others'.<sup>3</sup> This system also obtained at Taxila ; for instance, the Kuru prince Sutasoma, who acquired proficiency earlier, was entrusted with the teaching of his brother prince, the heir apparent of Banaras.<sup>4</sup> Senior students at Taxila were often put in charge of their schools during the temporary absence of their teachers.<sup>5</sup> This method of entrusting teaching work to brilliant students had a great educational value. It placed a high incentive before the student world. It afforded opportunities to intelligent student to learn the art of teaching, and thus indirectly performed the same function as the Teachers' Training Colleges discharge today. It increased the efficiency and decreased the cost of the school by affording intelligent and free assistance to the teacher. It is

1. Waters, I, p. 160.

2. तथा समादिष्टेऽप्यध्यापयति । वृद्धतरे सन्नहचारिणि आचार्य-  
वद्वृत्तिः । A.D.S., II 7, 28.

3. P. 177.

4. Sutasoma-Jātaka, No. 537.

5. E. g., Sukha-vihāri Jātaka, No. 10.

well known that Bell and Lancaster had based their Monitorial System on what one of them had observed in contemporary Indian schools.

**Conclusion :** It will be seen from the above discussion that the method of teaching followed in ancient India was on the whole the best suited for an age, which did not enjoy the advantages of paper and printing. It developed the powers of memory, a faculty which is being sadly neglected in modern times. It did not however encourage cramming, because the texts that were memorised were well understood by students. Reflection and analysis was also encouraged, especially in the case of those students who had taken logic, philosophy, poetics or literature. Lucid exposition was a *forte* of Indian teachers, for which they were well known all over Asia during the first millennium of the Christian era. Debates were a normal feature of higher education. Individual attention was paid to the needs of students, which naturally ensured good results. The student must however have intelligence.<sup>1</sup> Hindu educationalists have pointed out that the best method would not produce the ideal scholar at the end of the course automatically. Time also was an important factor. Maturity of intellect and scholarship would become possible only by the lapse of years properly utilised in reading and reflection by an intelligent student.<sup>2</sup>

1. वितरति गुरुः प्राज्ञे विद्यां यथैव तथा जडे ।  
न च खलु तयोज्ञाने शक्तिं करोत्यपहन्ति वा ॥  
भवति च तयोभूयान्भेदः फलं प्रति तद्यथा ।  
प्रभवति मणिर्विंबोद्ग्राहे मणिर्न मृदां चयः ॥

*Uttararāmacharit, Act II.,*

2. आचार्यात्पादमादत्ते पादं शिष्यः स्वमेधया ।  
पादं सन्नह्यचारिभ्यः पादं कालक्रमेण तु ॥

*Subhāshitam*

## EXAMINATIONS

**No annual or final Examinations :** We have already seen that there were no annual or periodical examinations in ancient India. New lessons were given to students only when the teacher was satisfied after a searching oral examination that the old one was thoroughly mastered. The end of the education course was not marked by any lengthy and exhaustive examination, but by the pupil reciting and explaining the last lesson.<sup>1</sup> The modern practice to submit the student to what is known as *śālākā-parīkṣā*, where he is asked to explain the problems discussed on a page opened at random, is not mentioned in ancient books. Even if it goes back to ancient times, it can hardly be compared to the modern system of examination. At the end of his education the scholar was presented to the local learned assembly, where occasionally some questions were asked.<sup>2</sup> This presentation took place when the *Samāvartana* (convocation) ceremony was over.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore clear that the eligibility of a student for *Samāvartana* or receiving the degree did not depend upon the view of the assembly, but upon the opinion of his teacher.

**Literary Tournaments :** Rājasekhara describes the examinations held in the royal court<sup>4</sup>, and Charaka

1. *Mil. pan.* I p. 18.

2. *Br. U.*, VI, 2. 1 and 2.

3. *Dr. Gr. S.* III, 1, 26, *Āp. Gr. S.*, I, 11, 5.

4. श्रूयते च उज्जयिन्यां काव्यकारपरीक्षा ।

इह कालिदासमेठौ अत्रामररूपसूरभारवयः ।

हरिचंद्रचंद्रगुप्तौ परीक्षिताविह विशालायाम् ।

श्रूयते च पाटलिपुत्रे शास्त्रकारपरीक्षा ।

अत्रोपवर्षवर्षौ इह पाणिनिपिंगलौ इह व्याडिः ।

वरश्चिपतंजली इह परीक्षिताः ख्यातिमुपजग्मुः ।

*Kāvya-Mīmāṃsā* p. 55.

refers to heated discussions held in learned assemblies to test the relative merits of the contending physicians.<sup>1</sup> These examinations were, however, fundamentally different from modern degree examinations. Each participant in these literary affrays was anxious to prove, not that he possessed certain minimum qualifications, but that he was the best poet or physician in the land entitled to precedence, honour and annuities from the royal court. What Charaka or Rājasekhara have in contemplation is not a routine examination, but an intellectual combat among the distinguished physicians and scholars of the age.

**No Degrees or Diplomas :** Since there were no degree examinations, there were naturally no degrees or diplomas. From Tārānātha we learn that the Pāla kings of Bengal who were patrons and chancellors of the Vikramaśilā University, used to grant diplomas to student in a convocation held at the end of their education.<sup>2</sup> In medieval Bengal also learned bodies used to confer degrees like *Tarkachakravartī* and *Tarkālaṅkāra* on very distinguished scholars like Gadādhara and Jagadīśa. This practice of giving degrees and titles seems to be a new innovation of medieval times. Yuan Chwang informs us that unscrupulous scholars in the seventh century used to 'steal the name of Nālandā' in order to gain more respect.<sup>3</sup> This would not have been possible if the Nālandā University were in the habit of granting regular diplomas to those who had finished their courses there. Passing examinations and getting degrees, which dominate the present system of education, played hardly any part in ancient India. It was not the allurements of the degrees or the prizes but the

1. Vimānasthāna, 8.

2. Bose, *Indian Teachers of Buddhist Universities*, P. 61

3. Watters, II. p. 165.

thirst of knowledge or the desire to preserve the national heritage which was the main spring of the educational effort and activity.

**Competition kept within Limits :** The absence of annual examinations with prizes and scholarships for the top boys naturally kept the element of competition within proper limits. Bright and promising students were however selected as monitors and entrusted with the teaching of lower classes. So they also got their reward. The absence of alluring prizes and scholarships however naturally did not make them burn midnight oil, often to the great detriment of their health.

**No Degree to serve as a Shield :** Students in ancient India had not to pass through the fiery ordeal of examinations ; their lot, however, was by no means more enviable than that of the modern students. Armed with his irrevocable degree, the modern graduate can afford to forget all that he had learnt and no one can question his competence. The scholar in ancient India could not take shelter behind the buttress of a degree. He had to keep his scholarship fresh and up-to-date, for he was liable to be challenged at any moment for a literary affray ( *Śāstrārtha* ), and society used to judge his merit by the way in which he acquitted himself in such discussions. All that he had learnt he had to keep ready at the tip of his tongue; he could neither point to his diploma nor ask for time to refer to his note books.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Primary education why not important in early times—It did not include the 3 R's before c. 1000 B. C.—Reading and writing included in it in the first millennium B. C.—Obligatory Upanayana helps the spread of literacy—The curriculum and agencies of primary education—The time of its commencement—Methods of teaching—Primary schools and teachers—Extent of literacy—Vernacular education—Literacy at c. 1800 A. D.

**Primary Education not important in Ancient Times :** Having finished our survey of higher literary education in the last chapter, let us now turn to primary education. Primary education in the sense of the knowledge of the 3 R's has become important only in the modern age. At a time when paper and printing were unknown, the ability to read and write was not a very valuable or useful attainment for the smith, the carpenter or the agriculturist. Today it is rightly held that even the ordinary labourer or the artisan should receive primary education, for it enables him to utilise his spare time in reading useful literature which increases his knowledge, widens his outlook and makes him a more useful and intelligent member of society. Literacy however did not serve this purpose in ancient times both in the East and the West. Paper and printing being both unknown, books were fragile, costly and beyond the means of the average workman or the agriculturist. The ability to read and write did not thus afford the means of a wider intercourse with the thoughts and ideals of the best minds of the race, as far as the ordinary man was concerned. He could obtain access to the best wisdom of his country rather by attending *Kathas* and

*Kirtanas* ( popular religious sermons ) delivered by religious preachers, than by trying to reach the doors of a library which was a rather rare institution. Primary education as an end in itself therefore did not appeal to ancient Indians ; they could look upon it only as a step to higher education. It therefore naturally does not much occupy their thoughts ; Smritis say next to nothing about it.

**Kindergarten Stage :** Problems connected with the kindergarten stage of education did hardly engage the attention of ancient Indian thinkers. This need not surprise us, for in the West too they have been only recently tackled by educationalists. Our educationalists held that education was a serious affair and they were not very enthusiastic about combining it with play and games. They felt that a skillful teacher can make his lesson interesting by taking the help of the story and held that the use of the rhyme was quite sufficient to make uninteresting things like multiplication tables quite attractive to the child. Like ancient thinkers in all other lands, they have not proposed any devices of the kindergarten type to make lessons attractive to the young child.

## PRIMARY EDUCATION IN EARLY TIMES

( Upto c. 1000 B. C. )

### **Modern primary education non-existent :**

It is a moot point whether the art of writing was known in the early Vedic period. Even if it was known, we must remember that its use for the preservation of sacred literature was tabooed for a long time. The latter continued to live only in the memory of scholars for several centuries. Secular literature had not yet come into existence, grammar and arithmetic were yet to be developed and

commerce was in a primitive condition not requiring any account keeping. Primary education in the sense of the knowledge of the 3 R's was thus impossible. It is significant to note that early times knew of no ritual to mark its commencement.<sup>1</sup>

**The Nature of preliminary Training :** What the boys and girls were taught in their early school stage was not how to read and write the Vedic Mantras ( verses ), but how to pronounce them properly. During this period they were trained to realise the difference between short and long vowels, study the varieties of accents and to master the rules about the conjunction and coalescence of vowels and consonants. At a slightly later stage they were enlightened about the changes that took place in original words when they were combined together in Vedic stanzas.<sup>2</sup> This was the nature of 'primary education' imparted to students in the Vedic period. Such education will appear to us in modern times as rather strange, but we should remember that students could, when equipped with it, successfully prosecute their Vedic studies, which then constituted the higher education. The nature of primary education

1. Appendix I. A.

2. Cf. गुह्यं लघुता साम्यं ह्रस्वदीर्घप्लुतानि च ।  
लोपागमविकाराश्च प्रकृतिर्विकृतिः क्रमः ॥४॥  
स्वरितोदात्तनीचत्वं श्वासो नार्दोऽगमेव च ।  
एतत्सर्वं तु विज्ञेयं छंदोभाषामधीयता ॥५॥  
पदक्रमविशेषज्ञो वर्णक्रमविचक्षणः ।  
स्वरमात्राविभागज्ञो गच्छेदाचार्यसंसदम् ॥६॥

*Taittirīya Prāśākhya*, Chap. 24.

The view of Sāyaṇa, that the last verse refers to the approach of the Vedic scholar to heaven is untenable. The student's departure to the preceptor's house, and not to heaven, is referred to in the verse.



naturally varies with the nature of the higher education that is to follow it.

## PRIMARY EDUCATION FROM

C. 1000 B. C. to C. 200 B. C.

**Introduction of Reading and Writing :** There is ample evidence to show that the art of writing was well known to the Aryans at least from c. 1000 B. C., if not from an earlier date. Reading and writing must therefore have gradually begun to form an integral part of primary education. It is true that the custodians of the Vedic literature still continued to disdain the aid of the art of writing for its preservation. But the new sciences that developed during this period, like grammar, etymology, metrics, etc., had no prejudice against it. As a matter of fact a proper grounding in these subjects, which were taught to all Vedic students, necessitated the knowledge of reading and writing. When once the alphabet came into general use, it is difficult to imagine how scholars, who intended to devote themselves to the study of the Vedic literature, grammar or phonology could have ignored its help. From the early centuries of the Christian era, writing and arithmetic were regarded, to quote the words of the Tamil thinker, Tiruvalluvar, at the two eyes of the soul, very useful in perfecting its insight into the nature of things. It may be passingly observed that reading and writing were introduced in Greek schools in c. 600 B. C.; in India the event has to be placed much earlier.

**Obligatory Upanayana helps the Spread of Literacy :** During this period, Upanayana became an obligatory *Sanskāra* ( ritual )<sup>1</sup> for all the *Trāivarnikas*

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1. See appendix I. B.

i. e., Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Even in modern times when this ritual has become a mere formality, we find that the percentage of literacy is fairly high among those castes which still go through its formality. We may therefore well conclude that the case was similar, if not much better, in the past. Since Upanayana of both boys and girls was universal among the Aryans at c. 600 B. C. we may well conclude that the percentage of literacy among them must also have been very high. It may have been as high as 80 percent. We can now understand the proud claim of an Upanishadic king that there was no illiterate person in his kingdom.<sup>1</sup> This was a natural consequence of an obligatory Upanayana being followed by genuine Vedic and literary studies

**The Curriculum of Primary Education :** Grammar, philology, arithmetic, astronomy and metrics were well developed in this period, and a good grounding in them was not possible without a knowledge of the art of writing. Reading and writing must have been included in primary education, although there was still a prejudice against committing the Vedas to writing. Elementary arithmetic and grammar, phonology and metrics also formed part of the primary curriculum. Sanskrit was still the spoken language and Prakrits were yet to be developed. Primary education was therefore mainly confined to the preliminary stage of Sanskrit education.

**Agencies of primary Education :** We have but scanty information as to how primary education was imparted. It must have been given in the family as long as it continued to be the centre of education.

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1. न मे स्तेनो जनपदे...नानाहिताग्निर्नविद्वान् ।

*Ch-Up.*, v. II. 5.

When this ceased to be the case, the family priest or the preceptor, to whom students were sent for Vedic education, might have imparted the primary education as well; for primary education at this time was a more integral part of higher education than is the case now. Primary schools also existed in some localities ; we sometimes get references to rich boys going to attend them, when their wooden slates were carried by their servants.<sup>1</sup> But who conducted these primary schools, or how they were financed is not known. Public institutions even for higher education had not yet been evolved, as we have seen already. Primary schools also must therefore have been private institutions. Literacy was very wide spread at this time ; it is but natural that some of the members of the Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya classes might have taken to primary education as a career.

## PRIMARY EDUCATION DURING

c. 200 B. C. to 800 A. D.

**The Time of Commencement :** Primary education was assigned a definite place in the educational system during this period by the exaltation of its beginning into a religious ritual known as *Aksharasvīkaraṇa* ( see Appendix I A ), which was performed at about the age of five or six. This was the time for the beginning of primary education. Authors of this period represent the Buddha, Raghu, Lava and Kuṣa as beginning their education at about this age.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese pilgrim I-tsing also found that primary education used to begin at the age of six.

**Scope of primary Education :** Boys began their study with the primary and compound alphabets and

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1. Katāhaka Jātaka, No. 125.

2. *Lalitavistāra* Canto 10 : *Raghuvanśa*, Canto III. *Uttara-Rāmacharit*, Act II.

used to spend about six months in mastering them. Then about a year was spent in mastering elementary arithmetic. Down to c. 250 A. D. Prakrits were in ascendancy<sup>1</sup> and so students must have spent some time in mastering them. After about 250 A. D. Sanskrit regained its position and even primary education became to some extent influenced by it. During the later stages of primary education boys used to study the Sūtras of Paṇini and some other simple grammatical works from age of 8 to 11.<sup>2</sup>

**The Method of Teaching :** The present generation cannot easily imagine the methods of teaching in primary schools in an age when paper and cheap text books were unknown. Boys of the rich used to write on wooden boards in some kind of colour. There is a sculpture in the Peshawar Museum representing the Buddha in his primary school as holding a rectangular board in his hand and engaged in writing upon it.<sup>3</sup> Poorer students used to write on ground, covered with sand or dust. There was no pencil ; they used pointed sticks or their own fingers for writing the alphabet. The latter method incidentally trained the muscles, the necessity of which is advocated in the Montessori method. The teacher used to write

1 During the period c. 250 B. C. to c. 250 A. D. most of the public documents are seen to be composed in Pālī, or Prakrits-Sanskrit appears in inscriptions very rarely, so this period is regarded as a period of the ascendancy of Prakrits, there is a tradition to the effect that the Sātavāhana kings of the Deccan had decreed that all their public documents should be in Prakrit alone (*Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, P 50 ). This tradition is confirmed by the inscriptions of the house. The Guptas were champions of Sanskrit and had decreed that Sanskrit should be spoken even in their harems, ( *Ibid* p. 50 ). Their records are all in Sanskrit.

2 I-tsing, chap. XXXIV-

3 A. S. R., 1908-4, pp. 246-7 and Pl. IXVI, I.

one alphabet on the board and the boys used to shout but its name as they went on writing it on wooden boards or sand-covered ground. This method is graphically described in a book of the early centuries of the Christian era<sup>1</sup> and prevailed down to recent times. The multiplication tables were recited similarly by the whole class, following the lead given by the teacher or the monitor. Boys had no primers or text books with them down to the middle of the last century, and guardians had not to meet a never ending demand of the school for fresh exercises and copybooks. The practice in writing was not given on paper, it was difficult to procure even after c. 1000 A. D. Boys first acquired the mastery in writing the alphabet on the sand board. When this was done, teachers used to write on a palm leaf with an iron style and hand over the leaf to the pupil for tracing the letters on the same leaf with charcoal ink which was rubbed out at the end of the day. The same palm leaf thus served as a model for several days and several boys. When the fingers of boys had acquired the necessary suppleness, they were then asked to write on plantain leaves. When they were well practised in writing on plantain leaves, they were taught to write on the palm leaf.<sup>2</sup> More practice was given in writing than in reading, as books were rather rare.

**Primary Schools and Teachers :** Only occasionally our sources refer to primary schools and teachers ; they are usually described as *lipiśālās* (alphabet schools) and *dārakāchāryas*

1. Cf. तत्र बोधिसत्त्वाधिष्ठानेन तेषां दारकाणां मातृकां वाचयतां यदा अकारं परिकीर्तयन्ति स्म तदा अनित्यः संस्कारशब्दो निश्चरति स्म ।

*Lalitavistara*, Chap X.

2. Stark, *Vernacular Education*, pp. 28-48

( teachers of little children ) respectively.<sup>1</sup> Public schools even for higher education did not exist down to c. 400 A. D; it is no wonder that they should have been very scarce also for primary education for a long time. Education was thus mostly imparted by private teachers in private schools. Family priests continued to impart primary education for a fairly long time. From about the 5th century A. D. a great impetus was given to higher education by the founding of a number of public schools and colleges. This must have given an indirect impetus to primary education also ; for the less capable products of these institutions might have taken to primary education as a career. Primary teachers, by 10 means highly qualified for their task, figured in Kashmir society during the 10th century A. D.;<sup>2</sup> the same might have been the case elsewhere also. Sometimes primary teachers were employed by the rich to educate their family children and the children of other villagers were also allowed to read along with them. If a village had not a rich person to engage a teacher on his own account, a number of guardians used to cooperate in engaging the services of a teacher, each paying according to his ability. In the majority of cases, however, private teachers used to start schools on their own initiative, relying upon the uncertain income of voluntary fees and contributions from the guardians of students. The average income of a teacher in Bengal just before the advent of the British rule was more or less equal to the emoluments of the village accountant;<sup>3</sup> the same

1. लिपिशालामुपनीयते स्म कुमारः । तत्र विश्वामित्रो नाम  
दारकाचार्यः । *Lalitavistara*, Chap. X.

2. *Rājataranginī*, Vol. I, pp. 134 & 196 ( Eng. Tr. )

3. Stark, *Vernacular Education in Bengal*, pp 28 ff.

might have been the case throughout the earlier history. In some localities in Madras presidency teachers used to receive grain-shares at the time of harvest just like carpenters or smiths; this system does not seem to have been universal,<sup>1</sup> for the services of a teacher were not required by every villager; as was the case with those of a smith or a potter. Primary teachers usually belonged to the families of the village accountants, priests, writers (Kāyasthas) or traders, which were invariably literate. Like the teachers of the Vedas they were not exclusively Brahmanas. This was the case even in the Smṛiti period; for some of the Smṛiti writers refer with disapproval to the custom of non-Brahmanas being the teachers of Brahmanas.

**Extent of Literacy at c. 800 A. D. :** Upanayana, which had given an indirect impetus to the spread of literacy, gradually ceased to be performed in the case of the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas during the first five centuries of the Christian era. Automatic initiation into the 3 R's, which was ensured by this ritual, thus ceased gradually to be a reality with the majority of the Aryans. This gave a setback to the spread of literacy during this period. Vaishyas engaged in trade were literate and often cultured; the members of the guild of weavers at Mandsore in mālhwā were well versed in folklore and astrology during the 5th century A. D.<sup>2</sup> The same might have been the case with better class traders and merchants during this period. Kshatriyas engaged in administrative work were of course literate. It is however doubtful whether the ordinary agriculturist or soldier, who had inherited no

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1. *Report of the Madras Provincial committee, Evidence*, pp. 20, 154, 173.

2. *Fleet, Gupta Inscriptions*, pp. 80-7.

cultural tradition and who had discontinued Upa-nayana at this time, were literate. Literacy among the males of the three higher castes must have been hardly more than about 40 percent towards the end of the 8th century A. D. The Shudras, who formed the bulk of the labouring classes and the untouchables were all illiterate. As a class, women also had ceased to be literate towards the end of the 8th century, as has been shown already.

### PRIMARY EDUCATION DURING

C. 800-1200 A. D.

**Vernaculars and Primary Education :** Vernaculars began to develop during this period and ordinary men ceased to understand Sanskrit. This must have produced a great change in the curriculum of primary education also. Those who intended to specialise in Sanskrit must have continued to spend a part of their time in early childhood in memorising dictionaries ( *Koshas* ) and verbal conjugations and nominal declensions. Those however who had no such ambition must have concentrated on the study of vernaculars in the primary stage. Some inscriptions of this period refer to the arrangements made for the teaching of vernaculars in the schools and colleges. A school at Talgund in Mysore state had made provision for the teaching of Canarese in the 12th century A. D.;<sup>1</sup> a college at Narsipur in the same state was providing for the teaching of the vernaculars—Canarese, Telugu and Marathi,—in 1290 A. D.<sup>2</sup> If higher colleges were making provision for the teaching of the vernaculars of other provinces also, we can well conclude that

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1. *E. C.*, VII, Shikarpur, No. 185.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, Narsipur, No. 27.



Primary education at this time was almost entirely dominated by vernaculars.

**The Scope of the Vernacular Education :** When Sanskrit was the spoken language in earlier days, primary education was intended to become an integral part of the higher Sanskritic studies. When Sanskrit became a dead language as far as the masses were concerned, primary education became Vernacular education and developed a self-contained course. Vernacular education of the masses was organised not with a view to enable them to develop into good Sanskrit scholars, but with the object of making them efficient in their ordinary walks of life. Reading, writing, commercial arithmetic, accountancy, good knowledge of vernaculars with perhaps a smattering of Sanskrit, and moral training through the stories of epics constituted the curriculum of the vernacular education at about 1200 A. D. The same continued to be the case during the subsequent centuries as well. In the case of Brahmana boys, who intended to take to Sanskritic education later, elements of Sanskrit grammar were included ; but agricultural and commercial arithmetic dominated the courses intended for students hailing from agricultural and commercial classes. How to measure the area of fields, how to deduce monthly wages from the daily ones and vice versa, how to find the prices of corn per maund when those per seer were given, etc.—questions like these engaged the attention of the teachers and students in primary schools.

**The extent of Literacy at c. 1200 A. D. :** With the levelling down of both the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas to the position of the Shudras, the extent of literacy must have further gone down during the period. The average farmer at this time was illiterate and

members of commercial and industrial guilds were no longer as educated and cultured as those of the weavers' guild at Mandsore in c. 400 A. D. We have however no sufficient evidence to compute the extent of literacy at c. 1200 A. D. We may perhaps utilise the data about the state of affairs at the advent of British rule in this connection. The village teacher was not usually one of the grain-sharing servants supported by the village community; his services therefore were clearly required not by the whole community, but only by certain section of it; literacy must have been confined only to them. In the second decade of the 19th century Sir Thomas Monroe found a primary school in every village; 'I am inclined' says he, 'to estimate the proportion of male population receiving education to be nearer one third than one fourth'.<sup>1</sup> In Bengal at this time most villages possessed schools for primary education, but the percentage of boys attending them varied in different places. In some districts<sup>2</sup> as many as 18 percent of the boys of the school-going age attended schools, in others the percentage was only 3. In Mālwa, which for more than half a century was suffering from anarchy. Malcolm found a school in almost every village with more than 100 houses.<sup>3</sup> It would therefore appear that about 15 percent of the boys of the school-going age were attending schools towards the beginning of the 19th century. If in spite of the prevailing unsettled conditions, about 15 percent of boys were attending schools at the beginning of the 19th century, we may well conclude that the percentage may have been at least twice this figure at the end of

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1. Quoted by Sen in *History of Elementary Education*, p. 73.

2. *Ibid.*, 76.

3. Malcolm *Memoirs of Central India and Malwa*, p. 158.

the Hindu period. For during the Muslim rule the government educational effort for a long time was confined only to the Muslim section of the population ; Hindus also could not continue to get the same state patronage for their education and literature, which was possible under their own rule. This must have affected the spread of education and the extent of literacy in the population as a whole, which was predominantly Hindu. If therefore the percentage of literate male population among Indians as a whole was about 15 at the beginning of the 19th century, it may as well have been about thirty towards the end of the 12th century A. D. At the time when Upanayana was a reality with the whole of the Aryan community, we have already seen that the percentage of literacy in it must have been as high as 80. Towards the end of the 8th century A. D. it had declined to about 40 as shown already. It further went down by about another 10 percent by the 12th century A. D. These percentages however refer to male population only and are exclusive of the Shudras and Untouchables, who were as a rule all illiterate.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PROFESSIONAL AND USEFUL EDUCATION.

**MEDICAL EDUCATION**—Its general features—Training in surgery—Arrangements for practical training—Duration of the course and examination—Medical education in later times—Veterinary education—**MILITARY EDUCATION**—Non official training agencies—Military schools—professional military coaches—Education of the princes—**COMMERCIAL EDUCATION**—Its general scope—How it was imparted. **TRAINING IN ARTS AND CRAFTS**—Society's attitude towards arts and crafts in early and later times—Training given by the apprenticeship system—Workshop atmosphere—Painter's training as an illustration—Efficiency of the training Was it narrow ?

**Introduction :** In this chapter we propose to take a rapid survey of some of the important branches of useful and professional education and of the ways in which it was imparted. Medical, military and commercial education and the training of artists and artisans for sculpture, architecture, painting, smithy, carpentry etc. will principally engage our attention.

#### MEDICAL EDUCATION

**Early progress :** Medical science is no doubt of hoary antiquity in India. The Vedic literature refers to the healing feats of Asvins, who though originally human beings, were later deified by a grateful posterity. This science was fairly well developed by the 4th century B. C., for the Greeks, who had accompanied Alexander the Great, were very well impressed by the skill of Indian doctors in curing the cases of serpent bite. The Jatakas refer to the medical students at Taxila treating for cranial abscesses and intestinal displacement.

**Some general Features ;** Medical education was usually imparted by private teachers. There was a ritual at the admission of students which will be described in Appendix I. E. The student had to be well grounded in Sanskrit, for most of the books on medicine were written in that language. Learning by rote was condemned ; Suśruta compares a person having only a verbal knowledge of the medical texts to a donkey conscious of the heaviness but not of the quality of the burden it carries. Specialisation was encouraged, students were expected to master the different branches of learning from different experts.<sup>1</sup> Practical training in surgery and pharmacy and constant discussion of abstruse points among the students and teachers were some of the important features of the training.<sup>2</sup>

**Training in Surgery :** We can get a fairly good idea of the training in surgery from our sources. The beginners were taught how to hold and use the surgical instruments by practising upon pumpkins, cucumbers, water melons, etc., under the teacher's directions. Puncturing was demonstrated on the veins of dead animals, the manner of holding the probe on dry Alābu fruits, scarrification on stretched pieces of leather covered with hair, sewing on thin pieces of cloth or skin, application of bandages on stuffed human figures and the use of caustics on soft pieces of flesh.<sup>3</sup> The novice was then gradually initiated in real cases and allowed to extract darts, cleanse wounds, and use the knife in piercing and cutting diseased parts of the body. How surgical wounds are to be made to dry up was also demonstrated.<sup>4</sup> Practice in the adminis-

1. Suśruta, Sūtrasthāna. IV. 4. 4. 8

2. Charaka, Vimanasthāna, 8. 4

3. Suśruta, Sūtrasthāna. Chap. 9

4. *Mil. Pan.*, Vol. II. 254-5

tration of emetics, purges and enemas was given to all. Suśruta emphasises on the importance of dissection for perfecting the student's knowledge; and points out that mere book learning cannot give a clear idea of the actual internal constituents of the human body. Corpses used to be decomposed in water and students were then required to dissect them and visualise the nature of skin, muscles, arteries, bones, internal organs, etc.<sup>1</sup> Anatomical knowledge that was thus imparted was fairly high when compared with the contemporary standards elsewhere. Unfortunately in the course of time dissection went out of vogue, causing a setback to the progress of the medical science.

**Arrangements for practical Training :** Students received practical training in surgery and medicine, usually through private practice of their teachers. In some cases hospitals were attached to colleges. In great cities like Pāṭalīputra there existed big charitable hospitals, which must have afforded good opportunities for training medical students. Excavations at Kumrāhār near Patna have revealed in 1953 the existence of one monastery-cum hospital named Arogyavihāra. Indian hospitals were well organised, for Hindu doctors were invited by the Abbaside Khalifas to supervise their own hospitals in the 8th century A. D. It is to be regretted that Fa Hien should not have given us detailed information of the hospitals, which he had seen at Pāṭalīputra. If he had done this, we would have known a good deal about the hospital management and medical education during the 5th century A. D.

**Duration of the Course and Examination :** The exact duration of the medical course is not known. Charaka and Suśruta do not enlighten us on the point. In the days of the Buddha, the medical

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1. Suśruta, śārīrasthāna, 5-49.

course at Taxila was fairly long; for his physician Jivaka was permitted to go home very reluctantly by his teacher, though he had spent seven years at that University. Charaka observes that no one can obtain a real all round efficiency in Āyurveda; this would also suggest a very long course. We may well presume that the student had to spend at least eight years, before he could get mastery in the subject. The completion of the course was followed by an examination. This is implied by the observation of Charaka<sup>1</sup> and Suśruta<sup>2</sup> that it is the king's fault, if incompetent doctors practise the medical profession. Śukra also prohibits a person to practise as a doctor without possessing king's licence.<sup>3</sup> None of our authorities, however, discloses the conditions under which the royal permission was granted under efficient administration. Very probably it must have been given to students who were certified to have finished their course either by superintendents of state hospitals, principals of colleges or famous private practitioners.

**High ideals placed before the Medicoes :** The convocation address before the medical graduates exhorted them to follow a very high ideal of professional conduct.<sup>4</sup> They must relieve distress in all quarters. They must strive for the welfare of all humanity. They must not desert a patient, even when their own life was in danger. They must continue study and research throughout their life:

**Achievements in the Medical Science :** The above advice seems to have been followed in a very large number of cases. India continued to be famous

1. Sūtrasthān, 29.8

2. Sūtrasthāna, III.52; X. 3

3. I. 304.

4. See Appendix III

for its medical skill throughout the ancient period. Her doctors could perform surgical operation for cataract, hydrocele, abscesses, extraction of dead embryos, etc.<sup>1</sup> They were in demand in Meso-potamia and Arabia for guiding and training the physicians there. Khalifa Harun sent several scholars to India to study Hindu medicine and pharmacology and induced about 20 doctors to come to Baghdad to become chief medical officers of state hospitals and to translate Sanskrit medical works into Arabic. Most celebrated among them was Manaka (Maṇikya), who was originally invited to cure an ailment of Sultan Harun, which defied the skill of Arabian physicians. He succeeded in his treatment and was later induced to become the director of state hospitals and translate the work of Suśruta into Arabic.<sup>2</sup> Arabic system

1. Sītā apprehended that Rāvaṇa might kill and dissect her limb by limb like a surgeon extracting a dead embryo ;

ॐ तस्मिन्नागच्छति लोकनाथे गर्भस्थजन्तोरिव शल्यकृन्तः ।

नूनं ममांगान्यचिरादनार्यः शस्त्रैः सितैश्छेत्स्यति मानवेन्द्रः ॥

Rāmāyaṇ. V. 28. 6

Non-discovery of anaesthetics and sterilisation processes was standing in the way of progress. Wine was administered as a partial anaesthetic. The *Bhojaprabandha* refers to anaesthetic called *mohanachurṇa* : but since it is mentioned in connection with a miraculous cure effected by the divine physicians Asvins, we may doubt its general knowledge or use.

ॐ ततस्तावपि राजानं मोहचूर्णेन मोहयित्वा शिरःकपालमादाय तत्करोटिकापुटे स्थितं शफरकुलं गृहीत्वा कस्मिंश्चिद्भ्राजने निक्षिप्य संधान-  
करण्या कपालं यथावदारचय्य संजीविन्या च तं जीवयित्वा तस्मै तददर्शयताम् ॥

*Bhojaprabandha*, after v. 318

2. S. K. Nadvi, *Arab aur Eharat ke sambandha*, pp. 103-23 ; Alberuni, introduction, p. XXXI. Saleh bin Bahala and Dahan Dhanvantari ?) were two of the famous colleagues of Manaka, who accompanied him to Baghdad.



of medicine owes a great deal to the Ayurvedic system.

**Medical Education in later times :** Training in the medical profession was fairly efficient in India down to the 10th century A. D. Ayurvedic doctors were keeping themselves in touch with the discoveries and developments taking place elsewhere, and also experimenting upon new preparations as better medicines for ailments and diseases. The use of mercury, opium and metallic preparations was introduced into the pharmacopeia in the medieval times. Discontinuance of dissection and consequent decline in surgery however gave a setback to the system. Owing to the prevalence of stricter notions of ceremonial purity, the touch of the corpse became a taboo and dissection was consequently given up. This became fatal to progress in surgery, the practice of which gradually died down. The medical profession began to be held in low esteem as the doctor had to deal with filthy diseases and touch dying patient. In the earlier period famous doctors like Aśvins and Dhanyantari were deified; now the followers of the profession began to be regarded as defilers of the company at a dinner table.<sup>1</sup> Purāṇas state that medicine became the profession of the descendants of the illegitimate son born to sage Gālava from his maid-servant Ambā.<sup>2</sup> Occasionally we no doubt come across grants of villages given to doctors by kings; there can be however no doubt that society as a whole looked down

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1. Manu, III. 152

2. Some of the Smṛtis also e.g. *B. D. S.*, I. 8. 9, assign the medical profession to the children of a mixed caste sprung from the union of a Brahmana father and Vaishya mother.

upon the medical profession, which could not but have told upon its efficiency and progress.<sup>1</sup>

**Veterinary Education :** The veterinary science had been developed in India fairly early. Sālihotra is its traditional founder and two of the Pāṇḍava heroes, Nakula and Sahadeva are said to have been experts in it. In the 3rd century B. C. veterinary doctors were fairly common; Asoka could find them in necessary number to man his hospitals for animals throughout the country. The army authorities used to employ them in army to treat the ailments of horses and elephants ( *Arihaṣṣūtra*, II. 30-2 ). There were special books also dealing with these subjects.<sup>2</sup> We however do not come across any veterinary schools or colleges, nor do we possess any information as to how veterinary doctors were trained. Probably army authorities used to organise their own schools to meet their own needs. In villages the profession may have been hereditary in some farmers' families, which may have occasionally taken some outsiders also to be trained as apprentices.

### MILITARY EDUCATION.

**Vedic period :** During the Vedic period the military profession must have been a popular one, as

1. An incidental observation in the *Mitāksharā* would show that the medical course was finished in four instead of eight years during the 12th century A. D., cf :—

अन्तेवासी गुरोर्गृहे कृतकालं वर्षचतुष्टयमायुर्वेदशिल्पशिद्ध्यर्थं त्वद्गृहे वसामीति ।

On *Yāj.* II. 184

2. *Aśvavaidyaka* of Jayadatta, *Aśvachikitsā* of Nakula and *Hastiyāyurveda* of Pālakāpya ( Published in A. S. series ) are the important works on the veterinary science. Some of these works in their present form are not later than. c. 800 A. D. but they had their precursors, now unfortunately lost.

the Aryans were engaged in subjugating the non-Aryans (*dasyus*) and establishing their supremacy in the country. We have however no information as to how military education was imparted. The superiority in horsemanship and chariot-fighting constituted the key to the Aryan success, considerable time must therefore had been devoted to give proper training in these subjects to the members of the fighting force. Chariot races, which were very popular in the age, must have played an important part in increasing the military efficiency of the chariot corps. Practice in the use of the bow and the arrow, the shield, the mace and the spear, which were the main offensive and defensive weapons of the age, must have played an important part in the training of the infantry.

**Non-official Training Agencies :** In modern times military training is usually given only by the state authorities when recruits join the army. Such was not the case in ancient India. The average citizen and villager was expected to be able to defend his own hearth and home : the *Arthaśāstra* expressly lays down that every village ought to be able to defend itself ( II 34 ). Villagers and citizens therefore had to make their own arrangements to get the necessary facility in the use of the weapons of the age in order to be ready for any eventuality. There were no military schools as such for this purpose; with the voluntary help of the elderly experts in the village, most of its youths could be trained in the use of the bow and the arrow, the *lathi* and the lance. That such was actually the case in several parts of India would become quite clear from the accounts of Alexander's invasion, as given by the Greek historians. In several places the Macedonian hero was opposed not so much by state forces as by the whole population.

in arms.<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that in many of the republican states of the Punjab, e. g., the Kaṭhas, the Mālavas, the Śibis, etc., every adult used to receive military training of a fairly high order. Probably the same was the case under monarchies, though perhaps to a less degree. Many villages had developed high military traditions and used to be exempted from taxation on agreeing to supply a certain quota to the army.<sup>2</sup>

**Military Schools :** There were also some cities in the country, famous as centres of military training. Taxila, situated in the former North-Western Frontier province, had naturally become a centre of military training. Kshatriyas and Brahmanas from all over the country used to go to this frontier city for getting mastery in the military profession. In one military college of the city there were 103 princes receiving training in the different branches of the military art<sup>3</sup> which included elephant-lore, horsemanship and cavalry training, and the instructions in the use of the different weapons then in use. Unfortunately we get no information about the management of this college, nor do we know whether it was a private or a state institution. Probably the former was the case.

**Professional Military Coaches :** From about the 5th century B. C. big empires began to be built up in ancient India, and soon thereafter the country came into contact with the disciplined soldiers of the Greek army. This gave an impetus to intensive military training and many enterprising captains began to start private military coaching classes with a view to supply highly trained soldiers to the state. Many such captains

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1. Mc. Crindle, *Ancient India, Its Invasion by Alexander the Great* I. 140.

2. *Arthasāstra* IX. 1

3. *Sutasoma Jātaka*, No. 222

existed as early as the 2nd century B. C., they used to supply trained soldiers to kings and receive in return from them lands, money, horses, etc. by way of reward.<sup>1</sup> Targets of clay or stuffed human figures were used to teach accurate aiming. A 9th century inscription from the Deccan also refers to a military captain, who is described as a marvel in training horses<sup>2</sup>; it is not however known whether this officer was conducting a private class or whether he was a regular professor in a military college maintained by the Rāshtrakūṭa administration.

**Conclusion :** The general impression left by the literary and epigraphical evidence of the 1st millennium A. D. is that a good deal of preliminary military training was given almost universally in all villages under the aegis of the village Panchayats. Organised institutions for military training probably did not exist in moffusil villages. Retired members of the state hereditary forces and local experts used to organise and manage military classes in their own villages, which were attended by most of the able-bodied adults in the locality. Further training was imparted by adventurous captains and final touches were given after the enlistment of the soldier in the state army in daily drills. It would appear that the weakness of the Hindu military machine lay in too much reliance being placed upon the training received by soldiers as militia men. This training, while quite sufficient to meet the needs of local disturbances, was inadequate to withstand regularly trained armies.

**Education of Princes :** A few words may be conveniently said here about the education of princes. In the early period we find kings sending their sons to

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1. *Mil. Pan.*, Vol. II, pp. 134-5

2. *E. I.*, XIII. p. 187.

distant centres of education like Taxila to receive education there more or less like commoners. But from about the 3rd century B. C. it became the usual practice to establish special schools for the education of the scions of the royal family.<sup>1</sup> Sons and wards of ministers and high officers of the state were also permitted to join these schools, as it was realised that suitable companions and mutual competition were necessary to ensure satisfactory results. The Royal School was usually located in the vicinity of the capital. It consisted of several spacious halls, each suitable for its special purpose. Gymnasium, swimming pools and extensive grounds for military exercises were provided. Experts were recruited from all over the country to teach different subjects. The curriculum included a study of the Vedas and philosophy, but naturally only such knowledge of these subjects was imparted as was necessary for general culture. Special attention was paid to the study of history, economics, politics, administration, and civil and criminal law. Lectures on these subjects were delivered usually in the afternoon, the morning time being devoted to the athletics and military exercises. Princes were expected to be experts in the use of different arms like the sword, the lance and the bow and arrow. Tournaments and hunting parties were often organised to test their skill. Fine arts like music and painting were also taught. Students in these royal schools used to stay in the boarding houses; their parents used to go there occasionally to see them and find out how they were progressing. The school course terminated usually at the end of the 16th year, when princes were allowed to marry. Though after this time, they would usually leave the boarding and begin to stay

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1. *Arthaśāstra*, I, *Kādamba* 7, p. 149

in the palace with their family, their education would not terminate. Training in actual administration would begin after this period and last for about seven or eight years. At about the age of 24 the education would become fully complete and princes were then regarded as eligible to become heir-apparents.

## COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

**General Condition of Commerce :** In the Vedic age, the Aryans had a greater liking for the sword than for the scales ; *paṇis* who were then experts in commerce are contemptuously spoken of in the Vedas. Gradually however when there remained no fresh lands to conquer and acquire, the Aryans must have turned to commerce. There was considerable inter-provincial and foreign trade going on in the Mauryan period. The maritime activity of ancient India was considerable, and the trade with Rome was very profitable to India during the early centuries of the Christian era. Much of it however was in the hands of Dravidians.

**Scope of Commercial Education :** We can get some idea of the scope and nature of commercial education from the training prescribed for the Vaishya caste by Manu,<sup>1</sup> and the qualifications required by Kautilya in the superintendent of commerce.<sup>2</sup> First of all a knowledge of the varieties in quality of the articles to be dealt with was imparted. Then came commercial geography, for the trader was expected to know the places where the different articles were produced and the nature of the route by which they had to be imported. Customs barriers in the period we are discussing were numerous, and profits often depended on selecting a route where the customs

duties were relatively light. The needs of the people of the various localities were to be carefully studied with a view to find out possible markets. A knowledge of different places and occasions of fairs and pilgrimages was also imparted, as it was necessary in this connection. The knowledge of the relative prices of different articles in different provinces and countries was also regarded as essential. Students were also taught the exchange value of articles and also of different currencies in various provinces and countries. Those who intended to deal with inter-provincial or inter-national trade were also given a working knowledge of the necessary languages. Principles of banking also formed part of the course. It is difficult to determine the percentage of persons in the trading community who received so wide an education. In the hereditary trading families of high status, all this education may have been a reality ; much of it must have been unconsciously picked up by the youths in the family shops. In the case of petty merchants the extent of the education was probably determined by the needs of the situation.

**Agencies of Education :** During the first millennium of the Christian era, most of the trades in the country had formed very efficient guilds. One of them is known to have maintained an Arts College in Karnatak during the 12th century A. D.<sup>1</sup> It is however strange to find that the commercial guilds should not have organised and managed commercial schools and colleges. The reason however is not far to seek. Down to the 5th century A.D. organised educational institutions did not exist even for literary courses. When they became fairly common in the country

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1. *L. A. Vol. VIII* p. 195,



a few centuries later, commercial classes did not feel it necessary to copy their example. By this time the caste system had become hereditary and the training in different trades and industries was usually imparted in the family itself by the elders. Where there were no elders in the family to train its children, they were usually attached as apprentices to some neighbouring trader or artisan. This apprenticeship system, which will be soon described, rendered any regular schools of the modern type unnecessary.

### TRAINING IN ARTS AND CRAFTS

**Introduction :—**We shall now consider the problems connected with training of students in arts and handicrafts like sculpture, architecture painting carpentry, smithy, agriculture, etc. Our sources of information are scanty, because neither Smṛitis, which have written about education, nor foreign pilgrims like Yuan Chwang and I-tsing who often throw considerable light on educational conditions, were interested in the problems connected with the training in arts and handicrafts.

**Attitude towards Arts and Crafts : Early Period :** It will be convenient at the outset to consider the general attitude of society towards arts and crafts. In the early period they were held in high esteem. Agriculture was the general profession for the average Aryan. There are prayers both in the *Rigveda* and the *Atharvaveda* for success in various agricultural processes and operations. It was not therefore a profession held in low esteem as in later times. The carpenter was so important a member of the Vedic society that the chief of his guild was included among the twelve courtiers to whose houses the king had to repair in person for offering oblations at the time of his coronation. Ribhus,

originally human beings, were deified as a reward for their extraordinary skill in manual arts. The same was the case with Aśvins, who though originally mortal princes, were later raised to the pantheon on account of their medical skill.

**Society's Attitude in later Days :** In later times however the attitude of society changed, primarily due to the development of the rigid caste system. The elevation of the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas was at the cost of the Vaishyas and Shudras, who generally used to follow manual arts and handicrafts. As the status of the Vaishyas and Shudras declined, the angle of vision to look at their usual professions also changed. Manual arts and crafts began to be held in low esteem. Carpenters and doctors for example began to be regarded as children of intercaste unions, which were disapproved by the contemporary orthodox opinion. All this resulted in a gradual boycott by Brahmanas and Kshatriyas of manual arts and crafts. As the best intellect of the community would not condescend to help their progress, the general level of skill began to decline both in fine and useful arts from about 8th century A. D.

**Apprenticeship System :** The training in fine and useful arts<sup>1</sup> was usually given by the apprenticeship system under which the students agreed to work

१. विज्ञानमुच्यते शिल्पं हेमकुप्यादिसंस्थितिः ।

नृत्यादिकं च तच्छिक्षन्कुर्यात्कर्म गुरोर्गृहे ॥

बृहस्पति in विवादरत्नाकर, p. 141.

Devapabbattā, while commenting on this observes कंकणकटकादिनिर्माणविषयं नृत्यं गीतादिकरणविषयं चकारास्तंभकुंभादिरचनाविषयं च विज्ञानं शिल्पमुच्यते ।

under his teacher for an agreed number of years. During this period the teacher was to afford free boarding and lodging to his apprentice. Our authorities do not state the duration of the agreement, but it must have varied with different crafts. It was usually longer than the period required to master the craft, because the teacher was expected to be compensated for the trouble in teaching and the expenses in feeding the apprentice from the wages he would earn as a fully trained worker during the remaining period of his indenture. The apprentice could not back out of the agreement, if the teacher was not remiss in his duties. If he deserted his teacher without a sufficient cause, he was brought back and compelled to stay, learn and work. The neglect of the training of the apprentice and the assignment to him of

1. Cf. स्वशिल्पमिच्छन्नाहर्तुं बान्धवानामनुज्ञया ।  
 आचार्यस्य वसेदन्ते कृत्वा कालं सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १७ ॥  
 आचार्यः शिक्षयेदेनं स्वगृहे दत्तभोजनम् ।  
 न चान्यत्कारयेत्कर्म पुत्रवच्चैनमाचरेत् ॥ १८ ॥  
 शिक्षयन्तमदुष्टं य आचार्यं संपरित्यजेत् ।  
 बलाद्वासयितव्यस्स्याद्वधबन्धौ च सोहति ॥ १९ ॥  
 शिक्षितोऽपि कृतं कालमन्तेवासी समाप्नुयात् ।  
 तत्र कर्म च यत्कुर्यादाचार्यस्यैव तत्फलम् ॥ २० ॥  
 गृहीतशिल्पः समये कृत्वाचार्यप्रदक्षिणाम् ।  
 शक्तिश्चानुमान्येनमन्तेवासी निवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥  
 वेतनं वा यदि कृतं ज्ञात्वा शिष्यस्य कौशलम् ।  
 अन्तेवासी समादद्यान्न चान्यस्य गृहे वसेत् ॥ २२ ॥

work unconnected with his craft<sup>1</sup> were regarded as sufficient causes to nullify the agreement and permit the apprentice to leave his teacher. At the end of the agreed period, the student could leave his teacher after offering him a suitable honorarium. If however the teacher offered him suitable wages, he was expected to serve him in preference to a stranger.<sup>2</sup>

**Workshop Atmosphere during Training :** Our authorities lay down that the apprentice should live in his teacher's house or factory for all the 24 hours. This was to ensure a thorough acquaintance with and grounding in the different processes of the craft that could be picked up only by an intimate and prolonged processes. Students were also trained to make their own tools in order to ensure perfect mastery of the profession. A painter, for example made his own brushes from out of roots or fibres, hair of squirrels or awns of various grasses. He did not rely on colours prepared by others, but knew how to make them himself. A repousser was taught to make tools suitable for the work in hand.

**Painter's Training as an Illustration :** In order to give an idea of the various stages of the training of

1. यस्तु न ग्राहयेच्छिल्पं कर्माण्यन्यानि कारयेत् । प्राप्नुयात्साहसं  
पूर्वं तस्माच्छिष्यो निवर्तते ।

Kātyāyana in Aparārka on Yāj. 84.

2. There is some resemblance between the Indian apprenticeship system outlined above and the system prevailing in medieval Europe. In Europe too the apprentice had to spend the earlier part of his indenture period learning his craft and getting no wages. When he had learnt his art, he would become a journeyman, but he could undertake no work except through and for the benefit of his master. At the end of the agreed period, he was at liberty to start his own business. In Europe, guilds would permit an artisan to take only one student for training ; We do not know whether there were similar restrictions in ancient India. Graves, *A History of Education*, Vol. II. p. 97:

the apprentice, we shall give here the different stages in the training of the painter. The apprentice was first given a practice in drawing lines and curves. When the hand, eye and memory were trained in the use of fundamental curves in this fashion, traditional ornaments and decorative motifs were taught. Then followed a training in the drawing of the mythical animals and designs with men and beasts in them. The master would then take his apprentice to assist him in his work at the temple. At first the student would help the teacher only in grinding colours, then in priming the surfaces, then in applying ground colours and finally in filling the outlines sketched by his master. Experience was thus given in practical work. In the course of time when the teacher was satisfied about the sincerity, devotion and ability of the apprentice, he would impart the trade secrets. Throughout the course the technique of the profession was taught in relation to real things and problems.<sup>1</sup>

**Theoretical and Moral Training :** Nor was theoretical and moral training neglected. A working knowledge of Sanskrit was imparted to advanced workers in sculpture, painting and architecture, as most of the books on the subjects were written in that language. A knowledge of Purāṇas and works on iconography was necessary both for the sculptor and the painter in order to chisel or paint properly the various themes of the Pauranic history and mythology. Architects and engineers used to receive the necessary grounding in mathematics also. The apprentice was always asked to remember that he was expected to be a pious and honest person abiding by the rules prescribed for the artists by sacred texts

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1. Coomaraswami, *The Indian Craftsman*, pp. 83-90

and tradition. The doctor was to remember that he was to save his patient even at the cost of his own life, if necessary.

**Efficiency of Training :** The training under the above apprenticeship system was fairly efficient, for it was both theoretical and practical and given in the workshop itself. It helped to raise the general level of the skill and workmanship in several arts and crafts. Indian artisans took no time in manufacturing scrapers and sponges that they first saw being used by Greek invaders. Fine thread and wool were used to manufacture sponges and they were then dyed, so that they looked similar to Greek articles. The efficiency of the Punjab ship-builders may be inferred from the fact that they could supply to Alexander the Great a huge fleet, probably of not less than 1,000 boats, in about three months' time. The skill in mining, metallurgy, smelting and welding attained by ancient Indians was of a high order; experts are still wondering how the composition of the famous Iron Pillar near Kutub Minar at Delhi could be made so flawless by the metallurgists of Chandragupta II ( c. 375-413 A. D. ) as to prevent its rusting inspite of its being exposed to rain and sunshine for more than fifteen centuries. In the *Arthashastra* of Kauṭilya, we find a fairly accurate knowledge of the nature of the ores of gold, silver, copper, etc., and of the processes by which they were purified ( II, 12-3 ). The weaving industry could command the markets of the greater part of the Old World before it was crushed by the advent of the steam power in the 19th century. In sculpture we find continuous progress from c. 200 B. C. and a readiness to learn even from the foreigner. Paintings as illustrated at Ajanta show a high development of the art. The beautiful cave temples of Western India and the graceful as well as huge shrines

of Orissa and South India show that the Indian architect could solve a number of difficulties, which we think it hardly possible to overcome except with the help of the modern machinery.

**Was professional Education narrow?** : Prima facie the professional education as given by the apprenticeship system seems to be narrow ; the student seems to have been taught only what the tradition and works of his profession had to teach. There is, however, some historical evidence to show that many of the artists and artisans of the age used to possess a good amount of cultural and literary education as well. Thus some of the members of the weavers' guilds at Daṣapura ( in Mālwa ) used to take active interest in astronomy and folklore during the 5th century A. D. There is no evidence to prove or disprove that what was true of this guild at Mandsore was true of the average artisan of the period. The conclusion may, however, be hazarded that down to the 8th or the 9th century A. D. artisans of the highest grade used to receive a fair amount of liberal education. Later on owing to the decline of literacy and the low esteem in which arts and handicrafts began to be held, there was a setback and artisans began to blindly follow the processes that were handed down to them by tradition.

## Chapter IX

### FEMALE EDUCATION

Eligibility of women for sacrifices necessitates their Upanayana and helps their education—Two classes of girl-students—Attainments of lady scholars in the early period—Early Buddhism helps female education—Arrangements for teaching girl students—Was there co-education? Deterioration of women's religious status after c. 200 B. C. retards their education—So does the lowering of the marriage age—Lady authors of the 1st millennium A. D.—They belonged to cultured families—Female education in ordinary families—Buddhism ceases to help it—Education of princesses and Kshatriya girls—Female education and economic independence—Female education in mediaeval times.

#### SECTION I

##### Female Education before c. 200 B. C.

**A strange phenomenon :** The history of the most of the known civilisations shows that the further back we go into antiquity, the more unsatisfactory is found to be the general position of women. Hindu civilisation is unique in this respect, for here we find a surprising exception to the general rule. The further back we go, the more satisfactory is found to be the position of women in more spheres than one; and the field of education is most noteworthy among them. We can however understand this strange phenomenon when we remember that for a long time education in ancient India meant Vedic education, and that it had to be necessarily imparted to all who were expected to take part in Vedic sacrifices, irrespective of their sex.

**Women eligible for Vedic Sacrifices :** There is ample and convincing evidence to show that women were regarded as perfectly eligible for the privilege of studying the Vedic literature and performing the



sacrifices enjoined in it down to about 200 B. C. This need not surprise us, for some of the hymns of the *Rigveda* are the compositions of poetesses. Even the orthodox tradition admits that the R̥gvedic collection contains hymns composed by twenty different poetesses. Viśvavara, Sikatā, Nivāvarī, Ghoshā, Romaśā, Lopāmudrā, Apālā and Urvaśī are the names of some of them. Man could perform the Vedic sacrifices only if he had his wife by his side;<sup>1</sup> both had to undergo a special initiation<sup>2</sup> on the occasion and take equally active part in its procedure.<sup>3</sup> Down to the end of the Mauryan period, the housewife was expected to offer oblations in the household (*grihya*) fire unaided by the husband, normally in the evening and sometimes in the morning also.<sup>4</sup> In the *srastarārohana* ritual of the Agraḥaṇa ceremony, the wife used to recite a number of Vedic hymns<sup>5</sup> and the harvest sacrifices could be performed by women alone, 'because such was the long standing custom,'<sup>6</sup> Form the *Rāmāyana* we learn that Kauśalyā was by herself alone performing a sacrifice on the morning of her son's proposed installation as an heir-apparent;<sup>7</sup>

1. अयज्ञियो वा एष योऽपत्नीकः । *S. Br.*, V, 1. 6. 10

2. *T. Br.* III. 8-3

3. या दंपती सुमनसा सुनुत आ च धावताः । देवासो नित्ययाशिरा ।  
*R. V.*, VIII. 31.

4. *Go. Gr. S.* 1. 3. The term *patni* denotes the special connection of the wife with her husband's sacrifices ;

cf पत्युर्नो यज्ञसंयोगे । *Pauini*, IV. 1: 33

5. *P. G. S.*, III: 2. See the commentary of Harihara also.

6. स्त्रियश्चोपयजेरम्नाचरितत्वात् । *P. G. S.*, II. 20

7. सा क्षौमवसना हृष्टा नित्यं व्रतपरायणा ।

अग्निं जुहोति स्म तदा मंत्रविस्कृतमङ्गला ॥ II, 20. 15.

the same was the case with Tārā when her husband Vāli was about to leave palace to meet Sugrīva in the fateful encounter.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that both these ladies are expressly described by the epic as *Mantravid*, i. e. well grounded in the Vedic literature. We need not then wonder if we find Sītā also offering her Vedic prayer during the days of her captivity in Lankā.<sup>2</sup> Kuntī, the mother of Pāṇḍavas, was well-versed in the Mantras of the Atharvaveda (*Mbh.*, II, 305, 20 ).

**Upanayana of Girls :** No one can recite Vedic prayers or offer Vedic sacrifices without having undergone the Vedic initiation ( *Upanayana* ). It is, therefore, but natural that in the early period the Upanayana of girls should have been as common as that of boys. There is ample evidence to show that such was the case. The *Atharvaveda* ( XI. 5. 18 ) expressly refers to maidens undergoing the *Brahmacharya* discipline<sup>3</sup> and the Sūtra works of the 5th century B. C. supply interesting details in its connection. Even Manu includes Upanayana among the *sanskāras* ( rituals ) obligatory for girls ( II. 66 ). After about the beginning of the Christian era, girls' Upanayana went out of vogue, but Smṛiti-writers of even the 8th century A. D. like Yama admit its prevalence in the earlier age.<sup>4</sup>

1. ततः स्वस्त्ययनं कृत्वा मंत्रविद्विजयैषिणी । IV. 16. 12.

2. संध्याकालमनाः श्यामा ध्रुवमेष्यति जानकी ।  
नदीं चेमां शुभजलां संध्यार्थं वरवर्णिनी ॥ V. 15. 48.

3. ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या युवानं विन्दते पतिम् । XI. 5. 18.

4. Cf. पुराकल्पे तु नारीणां मौंजीबन्धनमिष्यते ।  
अध्यापनं च वेदानां सावित्रीवाचनं तथा ॥

पिता पितृव्यो भ्राता वा नैनामध्यापयेत्परः ।

स्वग्रहे चैव कन्याया भैक्षचर्या विधीयते ॥

**Two Classes of Girl Students :** There were no child marriages in the Vedic period; as a rule however girls could not remain unmarried as long as boys they had to be younger than their spouses. Majority of them used to get married at the age of 16 or 17, and only a few would prosecute their studies after that age. Girls of the former class were called *Sadyovadhūs* and of the latter class *Brahmavādinīs*. The education of the *Sadyovadhūs* comprised the study of important Vedic hymns necessary for usual prayers and sacrifices. Music and dancing were also taught to them; partiality of women to these arts is often referred to in the Vedic literature.<sup>1</sup> *Brahmavādinīs* used to marry after their education was over; some of them like Vedavati, a daughter of sage Kuṣadhvaja, would not marry at all ( *Rām.* VII. 17 ).

**Attainments of Lady Scholars :** The attainments of lady scholars, who remained unmarried for a longer time, were naturally wider and more varied. In the Vedic age, they used to acquire thorough mastery in the Vedic literature and even compose poems, some of which have been honoured by their inclusion in the sacred canon. Lady students of Kaṭha and Bahvṛicha school were known as Kaṭhī and Bahvṛichī respectively. Kathi-vṛindarikā denoted the foremost female student of the Katha school, indicating the success of some women students in the Vedic branch. When the Vedic lore and sacrifices became complex, a new branch of study, called *Mīmāṃsā*, came to be developed in their connection. Though this was a subject, drier than mathematics, we find lady scholars taking keen interest in it. Kāśakṛitsnin had composed a work on *Mīmāṃsā*; lady students who used to specialise in it, were known as

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1. *S. Br.*, III. 2. 4. 6 observes that women can be easily won over by one who can sing and dance. Appreciation of music and dancing of course presupposes a training in them.

*Kāśakṛtsnā*.<sup>1</sup> If lady specialists in a technical science like *Mīmāṃsā* were so numerous as to necessitate the coining of a new special term to denote them, we can reasonably conclude that the number of women who used to receive general literary and cultural education must have been fairly large. When in the course of time the study of philosophy became popular in the Upanishadic age, women began to take keen interest in that subject also. Such was the case with Yājñavalkya's wife Maitreyī; she was more interested in studying deeper problems of philosophy than in wearing costly jewels and apparels. In the philosophical tournament held during the sacrificial session performed under the auspices of king Janaka, it is interesting to note that the subtlest philosophical question was asked by the lady philosopher, Gārgī Vāchaknavī.<sup>3</sup> The question was so subtle and esoteric in character that Yājñavalkya refused to discuss it in public. The keen reasoning and subtle cross examination of Yājñavalkya by Gārgī shows that she was a dialectician and philosopher of a high order. Atreyī of the *Uttara-Rāma-charit* was another lady, who was studying Vedānta under Vālmiki and Agastya.<sup>4</sup> Some lady scholars of the age like Sulabhā, Vāḍavā, Prāthitēyī, Maitreyī and Gārgī seem to have made real contribution to the advancement of knowledge, for they enjoy the rare privilege of being included among the galaxy of distinguished scholars, to whom a daily tribute of gratitude was to be given by a

1. एवमपि काशकृत्स्नना प्रोक्ता मीमांसा काशकृत्स्नी । काशकृत्स्ना-  
मधीते काशकृत्स्ना ब्राह्मणी । On IV, 1 14 : 3, 155

2. Br. Up., II, 4; IV, 5. Ct—सा होवाच मैत्रेयी । येनाहं नामृता  
स्याम् किं तेनाहं कुर्यामिति ।

3. अनतिपृश्न्यां वै देवतामतिपृच्छसि । Ibid. III. 6. I.

4. तेभ्योऽधिगन्तुं निगमान्तशिक्षां वाल्मीकिपाश्वादिह सञ्चरामि ।

grateful posterity at the time of the daily prayer (*Brahmayajña*).<sup>1</sup>

**Effect of Buddhism on Female Education :** The eventual permission, which the Buddha accorded to the admission of women to his Church, gave an impetus to the spread of education and philosophy among the ladies of the aristocratic and commercial communities. Like Brahmapādinis, several ladies in Buddhist families also used to lead a life of celibacy, with the aim of understanding and following the eternal truths of religion and philosophy. Some of them even went outside India to countries like Ceylon and became famous there as teachers of the holy scriptures. Among the authoresses of the *Therī-gāthā*, who were believed to have attained salvation, 32 were unmarried women and 18 married ones. Amongst the former, Subhā, Anopamā and Sumedhā belonged to very rich families, and are said to have been wooed by princes and rich merchants.<sup>2</sup> When so large a percentage of girls was leading a life of celibacy in pursuit of religion and philosophy, it is but natural that the general average of intelligence and education among them must have been fairly high.

**How Girls were educated :** Let us now try to find out the agencies for imparting female education during this period. We have already seen that for a long time family was the only educational institution, and even boys used to receive education only from their fathers, uncles or other elders. The same naturally was the case with girls. When however later Smṛitis like Yama<sup>3</sup> lay down that none but

1. *As. G. S.*, III. 4. 4; § *a. G.* SIV, 10. 3.

2. Horner, *Women under Primitive Buddhism*, Chap. II.

3. पिता पितृव्यो भ्राता वा नैनामध्यापयेत् परः ।

near relations should teach girl students, they are probably referring to state of affairs current by about the beginning of the Christian era; for there is evidence to show that such was not the case in the earlier period. When a large number of women were receiving higher education and were making their own contributions to the march of knowledge, it is but natural to suppose that some of them must have followed the profession of teaching. And the presence of the terms *Upādhyāyā*<sup>1</sup> and *Upādhyāyāni* in Sanskrit language supports this conjecture. The latter of these words is a courtesy title given to the wife of a teacher, who may or may not be educated. The former, however, denotes lady, who was herself a teacher. That a special term should have been coined to denote lady teachers in order to distinguish them from wives of teachers would show that their number in society could not have been small. We must note in this connection that there was no *Purdah* custom in Hindu society down to the 12th century, and so there was no difficulty for women in taking to the teaching profession. Lady teachers may probably have confined themselves to the teaching of girl students, though some may have taught boys also. *Pāṇini* refers to boarding houses for lady-students, *chhātrīśālās*,<sup>2</sup> and these probably were under the superintendence of *Upādhyāyās* or lady teachers, who had made teaching their profession. Unfortunately we have no clear and sufficient evidence about the activities of lady teachers and the management of girls' boardings.

1 उपेत्याधीयते अस्याः सा उपाध्याया । *Pāṇinī* on III. 822.

2 छात्र्यादयः शालायाम् । VI. 2. 86.

Was there co-education? The modern reader would be anxious to know whether co-education prevailed in the past. Our sources however throw but dim light on the subject. From the *Mālatīmādhava* of Bhavabhūti, written in the 8th century A.D., we learn that the nun Kāmandakī was educated along with Bhūrivasu and Devarāta at a famous centre of education.<sup>1</sup> This would show that if not in Bhavabhūti's time, at least some centuries earlier, sometimes boys and girls were educated together while receiving higher education. Students joining such schools with questionable motives are referred by the Kāśikā. In the *Uttara-Rama-charit* also ( of the same author ) we find Atreyī receiving her education along with Kuśa and Lava (act II). The stories of Kahoda and Sujāta and Ruru and Pramadvārā, narrated in Purāṇas, would also point to co-education. They would further show that at a time when girls were being married at an advanced age and receiving co-education, sometimes love marriage used to take place as a consequence of it. When however there were competent lady teachers, parents may have preferred to send their daughters to read under them, but when they were not available, they may have sent their wards to read under male teachers, and necessarily along with male students. In an age, which looked upon love marriages as nothing abnormal,<sup>2</sup> co-education need not have frightened the parents. What percentage of girls

1 अग्रि किं न वेत्ति यदेकत्र नो विद्यापरिग्रहाय नानादिगन्तवासिनः साहचर्यमासीत् । Act I.

2 सुखत्वादबहुव्लेशादपि चावरणादिह ।

अनुरागात्मकत्वाच्च गांधर्वः प्रवरो मतः । Kāmasūtra, III. 5, 80.

गांधर्वमप्येके प्रशंसन्ति सर्वेषां स्नेहानुगतत्वात् ।

B.D.S., I. 11-13.7

received co-education is a question which we cannot answer in the present state of our knowledge. It could not however have been very large.

**Extent of Female Education :** It is not easy to determine the extent of female education during the period we are reviewing here. Vedic literature has preserved rituals to be performed by parents anxious for the birth of scholarly daughters<sup>1</sup>; it would therefore follow that many parents must have been anxious that their daughters should become cultured and accomplished ladies. Education of girls could not have been neglected by the ordinary well-to-do father. Upanayana ritual was also obligatory for girls, and this must have ensured the imparting of a certain amount of Vedic and literary education to the girls of all the Aryan classes. We may therefore presume that as long as Upanayana ritual was performed in the case of girls, and the custom of child marriage had not taken root in society, girls of well-to-do families must be receiving fairly good education. Such continued to be the case down to *c.* 500 B. C.

## SECTION II.

### FEMALE EDUCATION FROM *c.* 200 B. C. TO *c.* 1200. A. D.

**Deterioration in religious Status :** Female education received a great setback during this period primarily owing to the deterioration of the religious status of women. During the earlier period, Upanayana ceremony was as much obligatory for girls as it was

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1. अथ य इच्छेद् दुहिता मे पंडित जायेत सर्वमायुरियादिति तिलोदनं पाचयित्वा सर्पिष्मन्तमश्नीयाताम् । *B. Up., VI., 4. 17.*



for boys. We have already seen how this ensured a certain amount of higher education to every Aryan girl. During the period we are reviewing, however, Upanayana began to be gradually prohibited to girls. By about 500 B. C. it had already become a mere formality, not followed by any serious course of Vedic education.<sup>1</sup> The *Manusmṛiti*, which was composed at about 200 B. C., goes a step further and declares that girls' Upanayana should be performed without the recitation of Vedic Mantras.<sup>2</sup> But immediately in the next verse it is stated that it is really the marriage ritual of girls which corresponds to the Upanayana ritual of boys.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore clear that Upanayana of girls, even as a mere formality, was dying down by the beginning of the Christian era. Yājñavalkya (200 A. D.) therefore takes the logical step of prohibiting Upanayana altogether in the case of girls (1. 13), and all later Smṛiti-writers follow his lead, though some of them like Yama admit that once upon a time girls used to have the privilege of Upanayana and Vedic studies. The discontinuance of Upanayana was disastrous to the religious status of women; they were declared to be of the same status as that of the Sudras<sup>4</sup> and unfit to recite Vedic Mantras and

1. तत्र ब्रह्मवादिनीनामग्नीन्धनं वेदाध्ययनं स्वगृहे च भैक्षचर्या ।  
सद्योवधूनां तूपस्थिते विवाहे कथंचिदुपनयनमात्रं कृत्वा विवाहः कार्यः ।  
Hārīta quoted in V. M. S. p. 402; S. C. S., p. 62.

2. अमंत्रिका तु कार्येयं स्त्रीणामावृदशेषतः । II. 56.

Cf. also नास्ति स्त्रीणां क्रिया मंत्रैरिति धर्मो व्यवस्थितिः । IX 18

3. वैवाहिको विधिः स्त्रीणां संस्कारो वैदिको मतः ।

पतिसेवा गुरो वासो गृहार्थोऽपिपरिक्रिया ॥ II. 67.

4. वदन्ति केचन्मुनयः स्त्रीणां शूद्रसमानताम् । Purāṇāntara in  
V. M. Paribhāṣā. p. 40.

perform Vedic sacrifices. The wife's association with the husband in the family sacrifices became a formal matter and there were some theologians like Aitiṣāyana who were opposed even to this formal participation. (*P. M.*, VI. 1. 2. 2.)

### **Why Vedic Education was prohibited to Women ? :**

The causes of the prohibition of the Vedic education to women during this later period have nowhere been specifically stated; they can only be inferred. When Vedic literature came to be regarded as revealed, it was insisted that it should be very meticulously and accurately committed to memory. The Vedic course also became a lengthy one, requiring a long period of study, and could not be finished till about the age of 24. The marriages of girls, as a rule, were never postponed to this advanced age even during the Vedic period. Usually they took place at about the age of 16 or 17. Girls in well-to-do families therefore could get only about six or seven years for their Vedic studies; they could not therefore carry them out with that exactitude and thoroughness which was insisted upon by the age. In poor families, the exigencies of the household work must have resulted in only very little time being available for Vedic studies after the Upanayana. Girls in such families were often unable to recite even the formulæ in the marriage ritual prescribed for the bride; they had to be recited by the priest or the bridegroom (*Go. G.*, II. 1. 21.; *Jai G. S.*, I. 20). Dilettante Vedic studies were regarded as not only useless, but also dangerous; even the slightest mistake in the recitation of the Vedic hymns was regarded as very disastrous in its consequences. It was therefore probably felt that since women could not study the Vedic literature in the proper manner, its study should be prohibited to

them in order to avert spiritual disasters to the family arising out of the mistakes of amateurish Vedic girl-students. Spoken dialect had by this time become completely differentiated from the Vedic speech ; women were unable to speak even ordinary Sanskrit and used to express themselves in Prākritis or vernaculars. They must have experienced greater difficulties in correctly pronouncing the Vedic hymns than men, who could speak classical Sanskrit correctly. Leaders of society therefore felt that correct transmission of the Vedic literature necessitated the prohibition of its study to women. Their Upanayana was therefore also discontinued.

**The Lowering of the Marriage Age :** The mischief caused by the discontinuance of Upanayana was further enhanced by the lowering of the marriageable age. In the Vedic period girls were married at about the age of 16 or 17 ; but by c. 500 B. C. the custom arose of marrying them soon after the attainment of puberty. Dharmaśāstra works of the

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1. It is undoubtedly true that Mādhava, who flourished in the 14th century, observes in his *Nyāyamālāvistāra* ( p. 335, Bombay edition ) that women are entitled to Upanayana. A similar statement is made by Mitramiśra of the 17th century when discussing Manu II 66. The statements of these authors in these passages do not warrant the view that Upanayana of girls was performed in some families even in the 17th century A. D. The above authors are simply expounding the views of the earlier writers they are commenting upon, and not attesting to the contemporary practice. This would be quite clear from a wrong construction which Mitramiśra elsewhere places upon a passage in the *Pāraskara Grihya Sūtra* :—बाह्यतः स्त्री बलिमुपहरति II, 17. Mitramiśra combines the two words स्त्री and बलिम् into स्त्रीबलिम् on the ground that women were incapable of offering any oblations owing to their ignorance. Cf. एतादृशव्याख्याने स्त्रीणां तत्तद्वलिप्रदानानुकूलविद्याकल्पना स्यात् । V.M. S. p, 903.

period however permit the postponement of a girl's marriage to the age of 16 or 17 in case a suitable match could not be arranged.<sup>1</sup> Manu, though in favour of a marriage at 12 in normal circumstances, was prepared to contemplate the possibility of a girl remaining unmarried to the end of her life, if no suitable bridegroom could be found.<sup>2</sup> Later writers, however, of this period like Yājñavalkya,<sup>3</sup> Saṁvarta<sup>4</sup> and Yama,<sup>5</sup> most vehemently condemn the guardian who fails to marry a girl before the attainment of the puberty. This condemnation had the natural effect; from Alberuni we learn that in the 11th century Hindus used to marry at an early age, and that a Brahmana was never allowed to marry a girl above the age of 12.<sup>6</sup> Many marriages must have taken place much earlier, for the Smṛitis written at the end of this period begin to glorify the merits of a girl's marriage at the age of 7, 8 or 9.<sup>7</sup> When it was regarded as an ideal thing to celebrate a girl's marriage at so young an age, female education could hardly prosper.

**Female Education in cultured Families :**  
Though in society as a whole female education

1. E. g. *Ua. Dh. S.*, कुमारी ऋतुमती त्रीणि वर्षाण्युपासीत ।  
ऊर्ध्वं त्रिम्यो वर्षेभ्यः पति विदेत्तुल्यम् । XVII. 59.

See also *Vishnu*. 24. 41.

2. काममामरणात्तिष्ठेद्यहे कन्यत्तु मत्यति ।

न चैवैनां प्रयच्छेत्तु गुणहीनाय कर्हिचित् ॥ IX, 89.

3. अप्रयच्छन्समाप्नोति भ्रूणहत्यां ऋतो ऋतो । 1. 64.

4. 1. 67.

5. 1. 22.

9. Sachau, II, 131.

7. See *Aśvalāyana*, *Saṁvarta*, *kāśyapa* etc. quoted in *VMS* p. 767.

received a great set-back during this period, it continued to receive attention in rich, cultured, aristocratic and royal families.<sup>1</sup> Girls in these families were given a fairly good literary education, though they were not allowed to study the Vedic literature. They could read and understand Sanskrit and Prakrit works and even detect mistakes accidentally committed by their male relations.<sup>2</sup> Special effort was made to give them a good grounding in domestic and culinary arts and fine arts like music, dancing, painting, garland-making and household decorations.<sup>3</sup> Tutors were appointed in rich families to train girls in these arts and accomplishments, as is shown by the employment of Gaṇadāsa and Haradatta in the household of king Agnimitra. Most of this education was finished before the marriage; but famous lady scholars of the age, to be mentioned in the next para, probably continued their education and reading even after their wedlock.

**Lady Authors of the Age :** Educated ladies in cultured families continued to make their own contributions to literature, as was done by the lady scholars of the earlier period. During this age, there flourished several poetesses in South India, who

1. पुरुषवद्वोषितोऽपि कवीभवेयुः ।...। श्रूयन्ते दृश्यन्ते च राजपुत्र्यो  
महामात्रदुहितरो गणिकाः कौटुंबिकभार्याश्च शास्त्रप्रहितबुद्धयः कवयश्च ।

*Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, p 53.

2. Stories are current in learned circles of how clever wives would bring milk to serve at the dining party when the order given was *dadhimānaya*; they could at once see the blunder committed by the husband and in order to save him from the reproach of ungrammatical speech, would pretend to understand the order, not *dadhimānaya* bring curds ( which would have been incorrect as *dadhi* is not a word in masculine gender ). but as *dadhi mā ānya*, 'do not bring curd'.

3. Vātsyāyana; ( *Kāmasūtra*, 1. 3. 16. ) lays down that girls should be trained in all the 64 arts and crafts.

composed Poetry in Prakrit. Among the authors from whom selections have been made in the *Gāthā-saptā-śatī* of Hāla, there are seven poetesses, their names being Revā,<sup>1</sup> Rohā,<sup>2</sup> Mādhavī,<sup>3</sup> Anulakshmi,<sup>4</sup> Pāhajī,<sup>5</sup> Vaddhavahī<sup>6</sup> and Śasiprabhā.<sup>7</sup> Some of the Sanskrit anthologies also have preserved the memory of a few other poetesses, who seem to have composed poetry of a very high order. Śilobhaṭṭarīkā was famous for her easy and graceful style, noted for a harmonious combination of sense and sound.<sup>8</sup> Devī was a well known poetess of Gujarat who continued to enchant her readers on the earth even after her departure to heaven.<sup>9</sup> Vijayānkā's fame in Berar was second only to that of Kālidāsa.<sup>10</sup> She seems to have attained a really high position among Sanskrit poets and poetesses, for the poet Rājasekhara compares her to Sarasvatī.<sup>11</sup> A drama,

1. I, 87 and 90.

2. II, 63

3. I, 91,

4. III, 28, 63, 74, 76.

5. I, 70.

6. I, 86. 7. IV, 4

7. शब्दार्थयोः समो गुणः पांचालीरितिह्यते ।

शीलभट्टारिकावाचि ..... ॥

8. सूक्तीनां स्मरकेलीनां कलानां च विलासभूः ।

प्रभुर्देवी कवी लाटी गतापि हृदि तिष्ठति ॥

9. सरस्वतीव कर्णाटी विजयांका जयत्यसौ ।

या वैदर्भगिरां वासः कालिदासादनंतरम् ॥

10. नीलोत्पलदलश्यामां विजयांकामजानता ।

वृथैव दण्डिनाप्युक्तं सर्वशुक्ला सरस्वती ॥

These verses attributed to Rājasekhara in the

Śukimuktāvalī.

11. शीलाविजामारुलामोरिकाद्याः काव्यं कर्तुं सन्ति विज्ञाः स्त्रियोपि ।

विद्यां वेत्तुं वादिनो निर्विजेतुं विश्वं वक्तुं यः प्रवीणः स वन्द्यः ॥

named *Kaṁmudīmahotsava* has been recently discovered, which is from the pen of a poetess, whose name seems to have been Vidyā or Vijjakā. The plot dramatises the incidents of a political revolution at Pātalīputra, showing thereby that ladies were not uninterested in the incidents of political history. Subhadrā, Sītā, Marulā, Indulekhā, Bhavadēvī and Vikaṭānitambā are some other poetesses quoted in later anthologies.<sup>1</sup> It is a pity that we should have lost their works. Lady scholars of this age took interest in criticism also; Rājasekhara's wife was both a critic and poetess. The umpire in the controversy between Sankara and Maṇḍanamīśra was the accomplished wife of the latter;<sup>2</sup> she must have been well grounded in Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta and literature. Some ladies were attracted by medical studies also; the majority of these must be specialising in gynæcology. Some of the lady doctors had also written authoritative works on the medical science. Among the Hindu works on medicine translated into Arabic in the 8th century A. D. was a book on midwifery, written by a lady doctor, whose name appears as Rūsā in the Arabic garb.<sup>3</sup>

**Female Education in ordinary Families :**  
Achievements of lady scholars cultured families were thus fairly high. Cultured families are however, relatively few in society. They could afford to

1. पार्थस्य मनसि स्थानं लेभे खलु सुभद्रया ।

कवीनां च वचोवृत्तिचातुर्येण सुभद्रया ॥ K. M.

See also M. Krishnamachariar. *Classical Sanskrit Literature*, pp-301-3

2. विधाय भार्या विदुषीं सदस्यां विधीयतां वादकथा सुधीन्द्र ॥

*Śaṅkaradigvijaya* VIII. 51

3. Nadvi. *Arab aur Bharat ke Sambandha*, p. 122.

employ special teachers for their girl. Ordinary families, however, were not so well situated, and it is therefore doubtful whether the average woman was receiving any education after about the 6th or the 7th century A. D. Asahaya, a commentator on the *Nārada-smṛiti*, who flourished in the 8th century A. D., justifies the theory of the dependence of women on the ground that their intelligence is not developed like that of men on account of the absence of proper education.<sup>1</sup> It is hazardous to make any statement about the percentage of literate women in society at the end of the 12th century A. D., but it could not have been higher than 5 percent. Literacy among men at this time was probably about 30 percent as has been shown in Chapter VIII. /

#### **Buddhism and Female Education in later Times :**

We saw how in the earlier period the Buddhist movement gave an indirect impetus to female education and produced a number of nun-poetesses. During this period however we do not come across any nun scholars at all. Nunneries had gone out of vogue by the 4th century A. D.; Chinese pilgrims of the 5th and 7th century A. D. do not refer to them at all. It is interesting to note that in modern Ceylon and Burma also nunneries do not impart instructions to girls as monasteries do to boys. We have therefore to conclude that female education, which was languishing during this period, could not get any impetus from Buddhism also.

#### **Education of Princesses and Girls in Aristocratic Families :** Ancient Indian history knows of several

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1. शास्त्राध्ययनानधिकारित्वात् शास्त्रमात्रोपजीविषमर्षिर्मज्ञानाभावात्  
अस्वातन्त्र्यम् । On XIII. 30.



dowager queens and princesses, who used to take active part in the administration of their kingdoms. Nayanikā of the Andhra dynasty ( c. 150 B. C. ) and Prabhāvatīguptā of the Vākāṭaka dynasty ( c. 390 A. D. ) were governing extensive kindgoms during the minority of their sons. The queen of Masaga directed the defence of her capital against Alexander the Great after the death of her husband. Several queens of Kashmir have fought on the battlefield,<sup>1</sup> and some of them like Sugandhā and Diddā have ruled a regnant queens. In the Chālukya dynasty several queens and ladies of the royal family like Mailādevī, Akkādevī, Kunkumadevī and Lakshmīdevī are known to have taken active part in the administration of the empire as governors of towns and districts.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore quite obvious that steps must have been taken in royal families in ancient India to give proper training to princesses in order to make them fit to carry on the administration in the case of emergency, or even in normal times in order to help their husbands. The training was both administrative and military. Administrative training was of course given when they had become old enough to take part in the governance of the kingdom, but military training was imparted during their adolescence. They were trained fairly well in the use of arms; they could also ride and swim. The son of queen Vijayamahādevī was called Gaṅgādatta, because the mother used to swim about in the Ganges, owing to a strong desire to do so during pregnancy.<sup>3</sup> In ordinary Kshatriya families also some military training seems to have been imparted to the lady

1. *Rājatarāṅginī*, VII, 905, 909, 931, VIII, 1137-9.

2. *I. A.*, XI p. 274, XVIII p: 37

3. *E. C.*, VII, Shimoga No. 4, dated 1122. A. D.

folk. Village women are often seen defending their hearths and homes, in times of danger, and even laying down their lives while doing so.<sup>1</sup> Inscriptions have recorded the cases of governments of the day honouring village heroines with the gifts of suitable ornaments.<sup>2</sup> The tradition of military training for ladies in high Kshatriya families continued down to the advent of the British rule. There still exists a commemorative tablet in Shikarpur Taluka immortalising the memory of a spirited lady, Hariyakkā by name, who died fighting in 1446 A. D., while avenging the murder of her father.<sup>3</sup> Maratha and Rajput princesses could usually play the sword and wield the lance.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Female Education and Economic Independence :**

In ordinary families, literature and the fine arts were usually the favourite topics of female education. This education was of course not calculated to make women economically self-sufficient, but we must note that the theory that women ought to be economically independent is of quite a recent origin. In the case of emergency, however, the Hindu woman could eke out a humble subsistence for herself and her children by taking to spinning and weaving in her spare time. In Pali literature we find instances of wives imploring their dying husbands to keep composed by pointing out that they could maintain the family by their skill in spinning and weaving.<sup>5</sup> The *Artha-śāstra* of Kauṭilya lays down that the state superintendent of weaving should make special arrangement for sending

1. *S.I.E.R.*, for 1911.

2. *Indl. I*, No. 75.

3. *E.C.*, VII, Shikarpur No. 2.

4. Malcolm, *Memorirs*, II, pp. 99-100.

5. Cf. कुसलाहं गहपति कप्पासं कंतितुं वेणिमोलिखितुं सम्भाहं  
गहपति तवाचयेन दारके पोसेतुम् । Vol III, p. 293.

cotton to and receiving the yarn from those women, who were crippled, or whose husbands were dead or had gone abroad, and who were thus compelled to seek work for their subsistence.<sup>1</sup> There is evidence to show that during the 9th century also widows, who were unprovided for, used to have recourse to spinning for their maintenance.<sup>2</sup> This humble but independent means of existence was available to the women in distress in India down to the middle of the last century, when the hand spinning and hand weaving industry was crushed out of existence by the mill competition.

#### **Female Education during 1200—1800 A. D. :**

It will be interesting to take here a rapid bird's eye view of the fortunes of female education during the next six centuries. During the Muslim rule the percentage of literacy among women went down very rapidly. Old, rich and cultured families were as a rule ruined by the political revolution, and they were no longer in a position to make special arrangements for the education of their girls. There were of course no schools for girls. Some new Hindu families did no doubt rise to importance under the new regime. But their number was very small and they did not generally possess sufficient culture to induce them to appoint teachers for their girls. Daughters of Rajput chiefs and some Bengali Zemindars were usually able to read and write down to the 19th century ; some of them, if unfortunately widowed, would devote themselves to learning and

1. II 23; cf. याश्च निष्कासिन्यः प्रोषितविधवा न्यङ्काः कन्यका वाऽऽत्मानं विभृयुः ताः स्वदासीभिरनुसायं सोपग्रहं कर्म कारयितव्याः ।

2. मृतपत्निकाया अनपत्याया असति भर्तृधनादौ दायिके च कर्तनादिना केनचिदुपायेन जीवन्त्याः । Medhātithi on Manu V 157.

even become teachers.<sup>1</sup> Jain widows too were sometimes taught reading and writing by the monks with a view to enable them to read their scriptures.<sup>2</sup> These were, however, exceptional cases. Society as a whole had become prejudiced against female education. It was believed that a girl taught to read and write may become a widow soon after her marriage.<sup>3</sup> The decline in literacy after the 18th century was so rapid that by the beginning of the 19th century hardly one woman in hundred could read. Such was the state of affairs in Malva and also in Madras presidency. In the latter province in 1826 only 4023 girls were attending schools as against 1,57,664 boys.<sup>4</sup> According to the then population of the presidency, 16 percent of the boys of the school-going age were receiving primary education; the percentage of girls receiving the same was therefore less than one half. In certain sections of Hindu population as among the Nayars, literacy was much higher, but such groups were few and exceptional. All the available evidence shows that by the beginning of the 19th century, about 99 percent of women population had grown illiterate.

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1. Ward refers to one such case of a Kulina widow, Hati Vidyālamkāra, who removed from Bengal to Banaras and obtained some pupils there. Williams, *A View of Hindus*, II. p. 503.

2. Malcolm, *Memoirs* II, 152.

3. Stark: *Vernacular Education in Bengal*, pp. 43-44.

4. *Report of the Madras Prov. Committee*, p. 5.

## Chapter X

### CONTRIBUTION OF BUDDHISM AND JAINISM.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUDDHISM TO EDUCATION—Ordination ceremony—Relations between the novice and the teacher—Education of the laity—Rise of public educational institutions due to Buddhism—Non-sectarian courses also provided for in them—Buddhism and primary education—Estimate of the contribution of the Buddhism. JAINISM AND EDUCATION—Early period, 500 C. to 100 A. D.—Rise of Jain chaityas and temples—Jain contribution to literature.

#### SECTION A.

#### BUDDHISM AND ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION.

**No Fundamental Difference :** There was no fundamental difference between Hindus and Buddhists as far as the general educational theory or practice was concerned. It was the fundamental tenet of Buddhism that the world is full of sorrow and that the salvation can be obtained only by renouncing it. In the beginning therefore it naturally concerned itself only with the education of novices and monks. When however in the course of time it took up the education of the laity also, its educational system did not present any important points of difference from those of Hinduism. Both systems had similar ideals and followed similar methods. This must have become quite clear to the reader from the previous chapters and will become clearer still from this section. We shall first however say a few words about the ordination ceremony.

**Ordination Ceremony :** The wise injunction of the Buddha, that every novice should be properly trained in the discipline and doctrine of the religion, was primarily responsible for the educational development in the activities of Buddhist monasteries.

Two ceremonies were laid down for those who desired to enter the Order, the *Pabbajjā* and the *Upasampadā*. The *Pabbajjā* marked the beginning of the noviciate period and could be given when a person was not less than eight years old.<sup>1</sup> The permission of the guardian was necessary. The *Upasampadā* was given after the end of the noviciate period, and the recipient had to be not less than twenty years old. If he was a debtor, an invalid or a government servant, he was refused admission. The ordination could take place only with the unanimous consent of the whole Saṅgha (Chapter). There were no caste restrictions for admission ( *ante*, p. 47 ). The novice had to affirm his faith in the Buddha, his Dhamma ( gospel ) and Saṅgha ( the Order ), and select a learned person as his preceptor. He was to follow strictly the rules and discipline of the Order; if he was guilty of any serious breach of discipline, he could be expelled by a meeting of the chapter. Like the Hindu Brahmachāri ( student ), he was expected to beg his daily food; but he was also permitted to accept invitations for meals from laymen. He was to do all manual and menial work connected with the monastic life, e. g. cleansing its floor and utensils, bringing water, supervising its stores, etc.

**The Relation between the Novice and his Teacher** were filial in character ; they were united together by mutual reverence, confidence and affection. Like the Hindu Brahmacharin, the Buddhist novice was to help his teacher by doing a variety of manual work for him ; he was to carry his seat and robes, supply him water and tooth stick, cleanse his begging bowl and utensils and accompany him as an attendant when he proceeded to the town or village for begging or preaching. The teacher was to each the student

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1. Like Upanayana, it has been compared to a spiritual birth, Cf. *परियाय जातितो जातो* *Majhima Nibāya*, II. p. 108; *Therīgāthā* No 17.

the rules of etiquette and discipline, draw his particular attention to the vow of chastity, poverty and abstinence from pleasures and help him in his intellectual and spiritual progress by suitable discourses and lessons in the morning and afternoon. He was also to help him in getting food and robes, and even to nurse him if he was sick. His own life was to be exemplary and the novice was permitted to act as a check on him if he was wavering in his faith or about to commit a breach of monastic discipline. The needs of the teacher were to be the minimum ; the famous teacher at Nālandā used to receive an allowance only three times larger than the amount given to an ordinary student. This would give a very clear idea as to how Buddhist teachers led a very simple life and cost next to nothing to society. They were lifelong students of their different subjects ; for marriage did not intervene to put an end to or an obstacle in their studies.

**The Education of the Laity :** As observed already, in the beginning Buddhist education was purely monastic and was intended only for those who entered, or intended to enter, the Order. This was but natural. Buddhism held that the worldly life was full of sorrow and that the salvation could be possible only by renouncing it. It could therefore naturally evince no interest in the education of those who intended to follow secular life and pursuits. In the course of time however it was realised that it was necessary to win public sympathy and support for the spread of Buddhism ; this could be more successfully done if the Buddhist monk could help the cause of education as was done by his theological opponent, the Barahmana priest. It was also realised that the best way to spread the religion was to undertake the education of the rising generation. This was

calculated to enable the Order to mould and influence the minds of the younger section of the society, when they were very pliable. There was thus a better chance of both recruiting proper types of persons for the Order and of getting a larger number of lay sympathisers, if the educational effort was not confined to novices, but was also extended to the whole community. Buddhism therefore threw itself heart and soul into the cause of the general education of the whole community from about the beginning of the Christian era. It may be pointed out that lay students were admitted in 'external' monastic schools of Christianity, 'internal' schools being reserved for those who intended to join the Order. Jesuits also used to admit lay pupils, when space permitted the step.<sup>1</sup>

**The Rise of Public Educational Institutes :** For a long time education was imparted by individual teachers in ancient India on their own private initiative and responsibility. The rise of organised public educational institutions may be justly attributed to the influence of Buddhism. This was but natural ; Buddhist monasteries already existed as corporate bodies ; when they developed into educational centres, they naturally became corporate educational institutions. Temple colleges of Hinduism probably owed their inspiration to the monastic colleges of Buddhism. In the heyday of Buddhism India was studded with monasteries, and about 10 per cent of them at least used to impart higher education. An account of the more important of these institutions has already been given in Chapter V. Some of these monastic colleges like those of Nālandā, Valabhi and Vikramaśīla

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1: H. Staunton, *Great School*, Intro. p. xv, *Quick, Essays*: p 39.



became international centres of learning and spread the fame of Indian education in Central and Eastern Asia. Nālandā could get an endowment even from a king of distant Java. Kings and merchant-princes in India vied with each other in giving rich endowments to these famous centres of education, and they in turn used to give not only free tuition but also free food and clothing, certainly to monks and probably to lay students also. How these institutions were organised and managed has been already explained in connection with the account of the Nālandā University ( pp. 116-125 ). Buddhist monasteries were either independent and self-sufficient townships or situated on the outskirts of towns and villages. They therefore enjoyed the advantage of a quiet atmosphere,

#### **Non-sectarian and comprehensive Courses :**

Though organised and managed by Buddhists, monastic colleges were neither sectarian in their outlook nor purely theological in their courses. Buddhist philosophy naturally played an important part in their scheme of education, but adequate attention was also given to the study of the religion and philosophy of the different sects in Hinduism and Jainism. More than two fifth of the time of Yuan Chwang was spent in studying Hindu religion and philosophy in Buddhist monasteries in India. Nor was the education confined only to theology, philosophy and logic. Sanskrit literature, astronomy-cum-astrology, medicine and works on law, polity and administration were also taught for the benefit of lay students in order to enable them to get government service or follow useful and learned professions in society. Books being fragile and costly, students were naturally encouraged to commit important texts to memory; this stood them in good stead in debates and controversies. But Buddhist education was far from being mere cramming of texts. Reasoning and analysis formed an important part in

the method of teaching; what critical foreign students like Yuan Chwang and I-tsing admired in their Indian teachers was not their keen memory which stored numberless texts but remarkable powers of explanation and exposition. Individual attention was paid to students; at Nālandā each teacher had not more than ten students under his charge.

**Female Education :** Buddhist nunneries went out of vogue from about the 4th century A. D.; so at the time when Buddhist monasteries had developed into colleges of international reputation, women were not receiving any advantages of the education imparted in them. Their marriages were at that time taking place very early. In the early history of Buddhism, however, the permission given to women to enter the Order gave a fairly good impetus to the cause of female education, especially in aristocratic and commercial sections of society. A large number of ladies from these circles joined the Order and became life-long students of religion and philosophy. Their example must have given an indirect encouragement to the spread of education among lay women as well.

**Buddhism and Primary Education :** It is well known that in modern Burma Buddhist monasteries afford valuable help in spreading literacy, as a result of which the percentage of male literate population in that country was as high as 38 even in 1902. It is therefore not improbable that what Buddhist monasteries are doing in modern Burma might have been done by them in ancient India as well. In its early history, however, there is no evidence to show that Buddhism was interesting itself in education of laymen. With the rise of the Mahāyāna school in the early centuries of the Christian era a great change took place, and Buddhist monasteries began to undertake systematically the

education of laymen as well. The accounts of the Chinese travellers, however, leave the impression that Buddhist monasteries were mainly concerned with higher education. It is however not improbable that the Chinese travellers may not have referred to their work in the sphere of primary education because they were not interested in it. We must further remember that primary education was a more integral part of higher education than is the case now, and so could not have been altogether neglected by the teachers engaged in higher education. Secular students, who used to serve their monk teachers as pages giving them water, food, etc., appear from I-tsing's account to have been students of primary rather than secondary education.<sup>1</sup> We may therefore conclude that in smaller monasteries where higher education was not imparted, monks may have engaged themselves in primary education. There is however no definite evidence on the point.

**Conclusion :** It will thus be seen that Buddhism may well be proud of its contribution to the cause of education in ancient India. Its colleges threw their doors open to all, irrespective of any considerations of caste or country. The rise of organised public educational institutions may be justly attributed to its influence. It raised the international status of India by the efficiency of its higher education, which attracted students from distant countries like Korea, China, Tibet and Java. The cultural sympathy which the countries in eastern Asia feel for India even today is entirely due to the work of the famous Buddhist colleges of ancient India. If some of the important lost texts can be recovered from Tibet or China or can be reconstructed with the help of Tibetan or Chinese translations, the credit must be given to Buddhist colleges, which enabled Chinese students to get their

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1. Takabusu, pp. 105 6.

copies. Buddhist education also helped the development of Hindu logic and philosophy by initiating and encouraging comparative study. In the period of its early history, it, championed the cause of education through the mother tongue ; later on however it could not resist the charm and influence of Sanskrit and began to impart education through that language.

### SECTION B.

#### JAINISM AND ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION.

**Early Period, 500 B.C. to 100 A.D. :** Jainism had laid down the vow of possessionlessness in the extreme form and so monasteries did not spring into existence for a long time. A monastery becomes possible when the monk community is permitted to own property in its corporate capacity and this was not possible under Jainism. So for a long time Jain monks led a solitary life, practising penance by themselves in solitary or sylvan places and therefore could make no contribution to the cause of education. The religion laid greater emphasis on rigorous austerities than on the preservation even of the sacred canon ; as a consequence a good deal of even the canonical literature was lost as early as the 4th century B.C.

**The Rise of Jain Chaityas and Temples :** From about the beginning of the Christian era temples and Chaityas became common ; they were usually managed by the laity. Gradually the custom arose of monks residing in these temples. Many of the Jain monks were great scholars and they used to instruct not only novices and Sabhus, but also the children of the laity. Jain temples thus became centres of instructions, but usually they confined their activities to enunciate the children of the laity into the principles of their own religion. Jain temples did not develop into public centres of higher education, as happened in the case of Buddhist

monasteries Jain laity was mostly following commercial and industrial pursuits and careers ; they were not naturally keen for education in humanities for their children. The latter recieved their training on the professional side usually in their own families, or sometimes through the agency of guilds.

**Jain Contribution to Literature :** Though Jain monks took no active part in imparting literary education to the laity, many of them used to be distinguished scholars in literature, logic and philosophy and gave a good impetus to the progress of these subjects, Sanskrit, Apabhram̃ṣa and Gujarati literature of Gujarat and Kathiawar during the period 1000 to 1500 A. D. owes a good deal to the impetus received from the famous monk scholar Hemachandra and his pupils. In the Deccan the Digambra Jain Sadhus have made a rich contribution to the development of philosophy, mathematics, politics and Puranas.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**—The aim of infusion of piety and formation of character fully achieved—Testimony of foreign writers and travelers—Success in developing personality, preserving and spreading culture and literature and promoting social efficiency and happiness.

**DEFECTS & LIMITATIONS**—Hold of religion leads to the neglect of secular studies and discouragement of rationalism in later times—The case in Europe the same—Hindu intellect ceases to be creative and assimilative and becomes receptive and imitative in later times—consequent adverse effect on education—Arts and crafts regarded plebian in later times—Education of masses neglected—Neglect of vernaculars in later times—Depth at the cost of breadth—No broad-based course including grammar, literature, mathematics, history and geography for the average student—Most defects arise in medieval times—A general estimate of Ancient Indian Education.

**Introduction :** We shall devote this chapter to the purpose of giving a critical estimate of ancient Indian educational system by discussing its achievements and failures. We have already made some general observations in this connection in the preceding pages : we shall here discuss the subject in a connected and comprehensive manner. We shall first proceed to ascertain how far the aims and ideals of the educational system, referred to in Chap. I, were actually realised in practice. This will to a great extent enable us to form its just estimate.

**Infusion of Piety and Formation of Character :** We have seen already how infusion of a spirit of piety and the formation of character were the first two important aims of the educational system. There can be no doubt that piety and religiousness are more characteristic of Hindu society than of any other community. The success of the educational system

in moulding and forming character was also very remarkable, as proved by the testimony of a number of foreign observers, belonging to different centuries, creeds and countries, who had no particular reason to pass flattering remarks about Indian character.

**Testimony of Greek :** Among these foreign observers, the Greeks are chronologically the earliest ( c. 300 B. C.). Politically they were not the allies but the opponents of the Hindus. They have made a few caustic remarks about some aspects of their culture, but they have candidly noted the high impression that the Hindu character and veracity produced on their mind. 'Indians have never been convicted of lying. Truth and virtue they hold in high esteem' says Megasthenes in one place.<sup>1</sup> This statement could not have been literally true, but it shows that the cases of cheating and swindling must have been comparatively few in society. Strabo and Megasthenes have further pointed out that law suits among the Indians were rare owing to their frank dealing. "They are not litigious. Witnesses and seals are not necessary when a man makes a deposit, he acts in trust. Their houses are usually unguarded."<sup>2</sup>

**A Chinese Tribute :** Yuan Chwang pays an equally high compliment to the Indian character during the 7th century A. D. He has carefully noted the weak and strong points in the character of the peoples of different districts ; but while summing up his impressions of the Indian character as a whole he says "They ( i. e., Indians ) are of hasty and irresolute temperament, but of *pure moral principles*. They will not take anything wrongfully and they yield more than

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1. Megasthenes Fragment 35.

2. *Ibid.*

fairness requires. They fear for retribution for sins in other lives and make light of what conduct produces in this life. *They do not practise deceit and they keep their sworn obligations.*"<sup>1</sup> Vast majority of Indians in Yuan Chwang's time did not share his religious beliefs and practices and yet they receive the above high compliment from the Chinese pilgrim.

**Arab and Italian Testimony:** Al Idrisi's impressions of the Hindu character in Western India during the 10th century A. D. are similar to those of Yuan Chwang's. Himself a Muslim, he says of the Hindus, "*The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to engagements are well known and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side: hence the country is flourishing and their condition prosperous.*"<sup>2</sup> In the thirteenth century Marco Polo also was impressed very highly by the character of the Brahmanas of Western India. "You must know" says he, "that these Brahmanas are the best merchants in the world and the most truthful, for they would never tell a lie for anything on the earth. If a foreign merchant, who does not know the ways of the country, applies to them and entrusts his goods to them, they would take charge of these and sell them in the most zealous manner, seeking zealously the profit of the foreigner and asking no commission except what he pleases to give."<sup>3</sup> When the morality of the trading classes is so high, the character of the average man must have been very noble. Ibn Batuta, another Muslim observer, describes the Marathas of Deogiri

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1. Watters, I, p. 171.

2. Elliot, *History*, Vol. I, p. 88.

3. Yule, *Marco Polo*, Vol. II, p. 363 (Third edition).



and Nandurbar of the 14th century as 'upright, religious and trustworthy'.<sup>1</sup> The same was the view of Abul Fazl, the minister of Akbar.

**Conclusion :** Travellers, pilgrims and merchants are usually disposed to make caustic remarks about the culture and character of the foreigners among whom they have moved ; when so many of them belonging to different times and climes and professing different faiths agree in paying a high tribute to Indian character, we may well conclude that there is no exaggeration and that the educational system of the country had succeeded remarkably in its ideal of raising the national character to a high level. It is only after the 17th and 18th centuries A. D. that we come across some foreign travellers, traders, missionaries and ex-officers passing strictures upon the Hindu character. Some of them were probably misled by their prejudices, as we find their testimony contradicted by others.<sup>2</sup> It is also possible that the Hindu character had suffered deterioration during the long spell of foreign rule in medieval times; for successful falsehood is usually the best defence of a slave. It is however worth observing that not a single foreign observer is found passing hostile remarks about Hindu character and honesty during the ancient period of Indian history.

**Success in developing Personality :** The development of personality was the third aim of the educational system and let us see how far it was able to

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1. *Ibna Batuta*, p. 228.

2. Col. Sleeman, for instance, says : 'Lying between members of the same village is almost unknown' I have had hundreds of cases before me in which a man's property, liberty and life depended upon his telling a lie, and he has refused to tell it.

Quoted by M. Muller in *India, What It can teach Us*, p. 50.

accomplish it. The available evidence is rather meagre to form a definite judgment in this connection. We come across several masterful personalities in different walks of life in ancient India, but how far they were typical of their age we do not know, Hindu achievements, however, in the different walks of life and branches of knowledge were fairly of a high order in ancient India down to the 6th century A. D., and this would hardly have been possible if the products of the educational system were not masterful personalities. Things however changed for the worse from the 6th century A. D., Brahmacharya discipline became nominal when a vast majority of students began to marry at a very early age; growth of independent judgment became stunted with the growing veneration for the past and its time-hallowed traditions. Self-confidence and self-respect disappeared in a great measure when society suffered from the convulsions of sudden foreign invasions and long alien rule frequently imposing a hated religion and strange culture with the aid of the sword. We must not judge the success of the ancient Indian educational system in building personality of students by the conclusions based upon its products at the advent of the British rule.

**Success in the Preservation and Spread of Culture and Literature :** Friends and foes have alike admitted that the ancient Indian system of education has been eminently successful in its aim of the preservation of ancient literary and cultural heritage. Very few of the Vedic works have been lost. It is indeed a wonder how so vast a literature could have been preserved without the help of the art of writing for the task. Among post-Vedic works too, the number of valuable books lost is not considerable. And here also the losses would have been practically insignificant if the destruction of temples and monasteries had not taken place on a wide scale at the time of the invasions of the

Mahomadens and during their subsequent long rule. The surprising amount of cultural uniformity that is to be seen even now over the length and breadth of India is mainly due to the successful preservation and spread of ancient culture and civilisation. If there are several features common to Hindu life, all over the country, contributing to Hindu unity, the credit has to be largely given to the educational system, which has produced uniformity in the culture and outlook on life of the Hindu community. The remarkable success of Indian missionaries in spreading Indian culture in Indian Archipelago, Siam, China, Japan, Tibet and Central Asia must be attributed to the success of the educational system in enkindling a strong zest in the minds of students for spreading the national culture and heritage far and wide, both in India and outside.

**Civic Responsibility and Social Efficiency and Happiness :** The success of the educational system in infusing a sense of civic responsibility and promoting social efficiency and happiness, which were two of its important aims was also remarkable. It was but natural that the educational system should have taken the help of the religious feeling and the caste discipline for infusing the sense of civic responsibility. The average man in ancient India was always loyal to the interests of his guild, village and caste. It was the success of the educational system in promoting social efficiency, which enabled Hindu society to be in the vanguard of the march of civilisation for several centuries. It is true that this ceased to be the case from about the 10th century A. D.; but the failure during the last millennium in this connection should not blind us to the success in the preceding long period of more than two thousand years. We shall now proceed to discuss the causes of the deterioration in the educational system and point out its limitations and defects.

## DEFECTS AND LIMITATIONS.

**Introduction :** We shall now proceed to point out the main defects and limitations of the educational system along with their causes. Most of these defects arose during the latter half of the first millennium A. D. Some of them were more or less common to almost all systems of education in ancient times and therefore the ancient Indian system alone cannot be blamed for them.

**The Hold of Religion :** Religion had an immense hold over the Hindu mind and many of the admirable features of educational system have to be attributed to this circumstance, as shown already. It did not make the educational outlook 'otherworldly', as is supposed in certain quarters. The ideals of the Vānaprastha and the Sanyāsa were no doubt purely spiritual, but such was not the case with the ideals of the educational system. It aimed at producing youths eminently fit to perform their civic and social duties; if any spiritual merit for the life to come was to result from Brahmacharya, it was to be through the proper performance of duties, which however were principally determined with a view to make the student an efficient and God-fearing citizen.

**Secular Studies tend to be neglected :** The majority of teachers in ancient India were priests, as was the case all over the ancient world. They did not exploit their position for promoting any selfish ends of their own, but they had the natural limitations of their class. When the even balance that was for a long time successfully held in Hindu society between the claims of religious and secular life ( *Dharma-Moksha* versus *Artha-Kāma* ) was disturbed, religious and semi-religious studies got undue predominance in the educational system. Secular sciences like history,

economics, politics, mathematics and astronomy did not receive as much attention as theology, philosophy, ritualism and sacred law. Commerce and industry and fine and useful arts made no appreciable progress during the last 1500 years or so, because those in charge of education showed no keen interest in them. It may however be pointed out that down to the 18th century, educationalists in Europe also regarded religious studies as the most important constituents of the educational course; many of them like Franke and Comenius held that all children should be instructed above all things in the vital knowledge of God and Christ.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Reason not held at a Discount in early Times :**

A greater defect produced by the hold of religion over the Hindu mind was the tendency to hold reason at a discount, which became prominent a few centuries after the Christian era. Such was not the case in earlier times, when society used to value intellectual freedom highly. Upanishadic thinkers have, for example, advocated bold and original theories of philosophy without showing any anxiety whatever to prove that their views were in consonance with those of the Vedic sages. In the days of the Buddha there were as many as sixty three systems of philosophy, very few of which cared to rely on Vedic authority for their premises or conclusions. System of philosophy like the Sāṃkhya and the Mīmāṃsā, which did not recognise a Creator-God, were admitted within the fold of orthodoxy. Buddhism and Jainism were not summarily dismissed as athiestic or heterodox; their scriptures were carefully studied in order to prove that their theories were unsound. For a long time society was successful in reconciling its reverence for the past with its regard for the advance of knowledge; it used

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1. Greaves, *Educators* pp. 72-3.

to silently abandon exploded views and quietly accept new theories and doctrines.

**The changed Attitude of later Times :** Unfortunately for the progress of learning and scholarship Vedic literature was canonised some time about 600 B. C. An almost equally high reverence came to be paid to the Smṛitis and Purāṇas in course of time. The authorship of these works came to be attributed to divine or inspired agency, and it was averred that what they contained could not be false, what they opposed could not be true. Theories began to be accepted or rejected according as they were in conformity with or opposed to the statements of the sacred books on the point. Intellectual giants like Sankara and Rāmānuja had to spend a disproportionate amount of time and energy to prove that their systems of philosophy were in conformity with and the natural outcomes of the Upanishadic hypotheses. If the hold of the Śrutis and Smṛitis were not so exacting, there would have been freer development of philosophy. At any rate many of the remarkable intellects of the Middle Ages would have found it possible to write independent works on their own systems of philosophy instead of being compelled to present it unsystematically, while engaged in the ostensible task of writing commentaries on the revealed literature. Instead of Nibandha compilations, we would have possessed original Smṛitis of the later times.

**A concrete Instance and its Moral :** Under such circumstances, there was not much scope left for research and originality in those matters where opinions were expressed in sacred texts. A concrete case may be given to illustrate the point. In the infancy of astronomy, the eclipses were explained by the mythological stories about Rāhu and Ketu attacking and temporarily overpowering the moon and the sun. It was an evil day for the advance of astronomy when

this mythological version got a canonical sanction by its inclusion in the Purāṇas. Hindu astronomers like Āryabhaṭa, Brahmagupta, Varāhamihira and Bhāskarāchārya knew the true causes of eclipses, but felt powerless to carry vigorous propaganda to explode their popular and mythological explanation canonised by the Purāṇas. Nay, Brahmagupta with a view to win cheap popularity, went to the extent of advocating that the popular view was correct, when he knew full well that such was not the case. In Chapter I of his *Brahmasiddhant*, he gave both the popular and scientific theories about the eclipses, but advocates the cause of the former. 'Some people think that the eclipse is not caused by the Head ( of Rāhu or Ketu ). This, however, is a foolish idea. The Veda which is the word of God from the mouth of Brahman, says that the Head eclipses, likewise *Manusmṛiti* and *Gargasamhitā*<sup>1</sup>'. What is, however, more lamentable is that Brahmagupta, who knew full well the real cause of eclipses, should have proceeded to condemn Āryabhaṭa, Varāhamihira, Śrīsheṇa and Viṣṇu-chandra for expounding the unorthodox but scientific theory that eclipses are caused by the shadow of the earth. It is important to note that Brahmagupta becomes guilty of intellectual and moral dishonesty because he was anxious to win cheap popularity by supporting the popular view that what was contained in the Vedas and *Manusmṛiti* could not be untrue. It is interesting to note that Varāhamihira first combats the Rāhu-Ketu theory,<sup>2</sup> but then immediately succumbs to it.<sup>3</sup> Āryabhaṭa

1. As quoted by Alberuni, Vol. II, pp. 110-1. The original work has been lost.

2. *Bṛihat-samhitā*, V.4 ff. यदि मूर्तो भविचारी शिरोथवा भवति मंडली राहुः । भगणार्धेनान्तरिते गृह्णाति कथं नियतचारः ॥ ४ ॥ अथ भुजगेन्द्ररूपः पुच्छेन मुखेन वा स गृह्णाति । मुखपुच्छान्तःसंस्थं स्थगयति कस्मान्न भगणार्धम् ।

3. *Ibid.*, v. 18. एवमुपरागकारणमुक्तमिदं दिव्यदृग्भिराचार्यैः । राहुः कारणमस्मिन्नित्युक्तः शास्त्रसद्भावः ॥

alone has perhaps the moral courage to be consistent with his intellectual convictions. But he also only hints that the popular theory is wrong, but does not dare to attack it openly.<sup>1</sup> If the Rāhu.Ketu theory of eclipses has continued to retain its hold over the popular Hindu mind for the last 1500 years and more, in spite of the scientific discovery of the true cause of eclipses, the reason is that Hindu scholarship of later times was too much in the leading strings of religion to carry on active propaganda against its hypotheses. Similarly astronomers continued to subscribe to the view that the constellation of the Great Bear moves from one lunar mansion to another in a hundred years, even when they had discovered that such was not the case. The discontinuance of dissection in the medical training and the abandonment of agriculture by the Brahmanas. Buddhists and Jains are also to be attributed to the hold of the progressively puritanical notions over the popular mind<sup>2</sup>.

**Similar Hostility to Rationalism in Europe also :**

It is, however, but fair to observe that in Europe too, reason had to beat a hasty and precipitate retreat when in conflict with the dicta of scriptures down to the beginning of the modern age. Galileo had to suffer for his astronomical discoveries. Through out the Middle Ages, educationalists were more anxious to impart traditional theories and formulæ than to train minds, capable of forming their own conclusions. Medieval philosophers and commentators were utilising reason only to prove that the scriptural hypotheses were correct. It was Lūther who first vindicated the cause of reason by declaring that what is contrary to reason must be certainly much more contrary to God. But Lūther too became a renegade towards the end of his life and

1. Golaḥāga, v. 49 यदसज्ज्ञानसमुद्रात्समुद्धृतं देवताप्रसादेन ।  
सज्ज्ञानोत्तमरत्नं मया निमग्नं स्वमतिना वा ।

2. I-tsing, p. 62.



declared, 'The more subtle and accurate is the reason, the more poisonous is the beast, with many Dragon's heads is it against God and all his work.' The truth was that the Reformers were unwilling to concede to others the right to interpret scriptures which they claimed for themselves. If therefore reason was at a discount in India from the beginning of Middle Ages (c. 600 A. D.), we must also note that the same was the case in Europe down to the beginning of the modern age. We should not further forget that reason was given full scope by the Hindu scholars and thinkers for more than about 1500 years, when it was superseded by the exigencies of the religious situation. The historian, however, cannot help regretting that supersession of reason should have taken place among a people, who had given full scope to it for several centuries.

**Intellect Creative in the earlier period :** Enrichment of the culture of the past along with its preservation continued to be the goal of the Indian educational system for several centuries. Intellect and reason were for a long time given full scope, originality was encouraged, and as a result we find remarkable creative activity in the domain of theology, philosophy, philology, grammar, logic, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, etc., down to about 500 A. D. Indian achievements in many of these fields were remarkable, judged either by the contemporary or by the absolute standard. Scholars from China, Korea, Tibet and Arabia used to visit India in order to learn what she had to teach in the realms of religion, medicine, mathematics and astronomy.

**It becomes receptive and imitative later :** Towards the beginning of the 9th century A. D., the creative vein in the Indian intellect got fatigued after

an intense activity of more than 2,000 years.<sup>1</sup> Hindu intellect had probably become old and no longer possessed the energy necessary to open out new paths of thought and action. Probably the heritage of the past became so great that all the ability of scholars was engrossed in preserving it. As also was the case in Europe down to the 16th century A. D., the habit of looking back to the past for inspiration and guidance became quite common ; it began to be instinctively felt that not much could be expected from the present. The golden age of inspiration had gone, no new achievements were possible, the best that the age could do was to preserve, expound or comment upon the masterpieces of the past. Hindu educational system was unable to create minds powerful enough to rise above the influence of those theories. For the last one thousand years and more, the Hindus have been writing only digests and commentaries on the works of earlier periods. Creative activity has come to a practical standstill.

**Similar Condition in Europe :** Here also we have to add that the spirit of the times was unfavourable for the formation of independent minds and intellects both in the West and in the East. In Europe too the Middle Ages were a period of intellectual repression. Jesuitical education also produced not creative or original but receptive and imitative minds. The Renaissance and Reformation movements, however, eventually succeeded in establishing an era of intellectual independence and originality in Europe; in India, on the other hand, the foreign rule and its natural consequences continued the spirit of the Middle Ages down to the time of the national reawakening towards the end of the 19th century.

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1. The creative phase of the Greek or the Roman intellect lasted for about 1,000 years only.

**Intellect ceases to be assimilative:** Owing to its excessive reverence for the past, the Hindu intellect ceased to be assimilative from about 800 A. D. Hindu sculptors assimilated Greek methods and enriched Indian art. Early astronomers like Āryabhaṭa and Varāhamihira were keeping themselves in touch with the activities and achievements of the workers in the same field outside India. Varāhamihira (c. 500 A. D.) pays even a handsome compliment to Greek astronomers and observes "The Greeks are no doubt Mlechhas (impure), but they are well grounded in astronomy and are therefore worshipped and honoured like the Rishis."<sup>1</sup> A remarkable change for the worse took place in the Hindu attitude towards foreign scholarship within a couple of centuries or so after Varāhamihira's death. Implicit faith in the past and in the correctness of its canonised tradition made the Hindu scholar narrow, bigotted and conceited. Of the Hindu men of letters of the 11th century A. D., Alberuni observes, "They are haughty, foolish, vain, stolid and self-conceited. According to their belief, there is no country on the earth but theirs, no other race of men but theirs, and no created beings beside them that have any knowledge or science whatever. Their haughtiness is such that if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khūrāsān or Persia, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not so narrow-minded as the present generation is"<sup>2</sup>. In proof of the last assertion Alberuni quoted the tribute of Varāhamihira to Greek astronomers, quoted above. Hindus in Alberuni's time had very good reason to feel a very deep prejudice against

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1. म्लेच्छा हि यवनास्तेषु सम्यक्षास्त्रमिदं स्थितम् । ऋषिवत्तेपि पूज्यन्ते.....॥ *Brihatsamhita*, III 4.

2. Sachau, *Alberuni* I, pp. 22-23

Muslim scholarship ; Alberuni's picture may have been to some extent overdrawn. But the contemporary Hindu attitude towards the Śrutis, Smṛitis and Purāṇas and other works of the past, which had been discussed above, would show that Alberuni's account of the mentality of the contemporary Hindu scholar is substantially true. Hindu education had ceased to remove prejudices, explode superstitions and broaden the mind, so as to keep it capable of receiving instructions from all quarters by the beginning of the 9th century A. D. Hindu colonising activity necessitating travel abroad had also come to an end by this time. Some Hindu doctors are no doubt known to have proceeded to Baghdad at the invitation of Khalifa Harun (786 A. D.—808 A. D.) to act as chief physicians in his hospitals<sup>1</sup>; we however do not know whether public opinion approved of their conduct, whether they returned home and were readmitted to Hindu society. Foreign travel for the purpose of education and the broadening of views became impossible when the sea voyage was prohibited. Whether it was undertaken in earlier days also for these objects is doubtful. There are no books in Sanskrit literature descriptive of geography, manners and climate of the countries adjacent to India, nor do the Pauranic geographers seem to have been in touch with the traders and colonisers, who were familiar with Babylon, Arabia, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, Burma and Borneo.

#### **Arts and Crafts become plebian Professions :**

Skill in manual training and industrial arts was highly appreciated in early times. Liberal and useful education was usually combined among high class workers. Brahmanas used to be skilled in mining and metallurgy, medical and military sciences. Weavers were often amateur students of literature, folk lore, astro-

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1. *Ibid*, Introduction, p. 31.

nomys and the art of war. This combination of liberal and useful education began to become progressively rare after the Gupta age. The status of the Vaishya became assimilated to that of the Sūdra as early as the 1st century A. D. and talented persons among the intellectual class began to think it below their dignity to follow useful and industrial arts. Like European classical scholars of the Renaissance period, Indian scholars became fascinated by the charms of the classical literature. Absorbed in the beauty of words and ideas, they neglected the world of Nature. Mathematics and astronomy, sculpture and architecture ceased to attract them. The level of intelligence among the industrial classes therefore became lowered down when their education became rigidly confined to the technique and processes of their own professions from about the 9th century A. D. As a natural consequence of such a state of affairs, the growth and development of the fine, useful and industrial arts became arrested in India from about the 8th century A. D. No advance is to be seen after that date in the realms of sculpture, painting, mining, surgery, etc. The old type of learning became stereotyped and it soon began to degenerate. It is true that India continued to retain her dominating position in the weaving industry down to the beginning of the last century; but it is doubtful whether any progress was made in the technique or processes of manufacture during the last one thousand years.

**Education of Masses neglected in later Times :**

At the time when India was making rapid strides in the different domains of knowledge, her education was broad-based. In ancient Athens one in ten and in ancient Sparta one in twenty five received education,<sup>1</sup> and women's education was altogether neglected. The case was much different in India down to the

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1. Monroe, *A Text Book*, pp. 26. 29.

commencement of the Christian era. Literacy among the Aryans was probably as high as 60 per cent in the days of Asoka. Anxious thought and care were also bestowed on female education. Things, however, gradually changed for the worse in the first millennium of the Christian era. The education of women began to be neglected. Kshatriyas and Vaishyas began to become progressively illiterate. It is true that in Europe also the masses were little more than barbarous and took more naturally to warfare than to schooling down to the end of the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> We can, however, hardly derive any consolation from this comparison, for the prevalent illiteracy in India was due to degeneration from a more creditable condition, obtaining in earlier centuries.

**The Neglect of Vernaculars :** Hindu educational system was unable to promote the education of the masses, probably because of its concentration on Sanskrit and the neglect of the vernaculars. The revival of Sanskrit that took place early in the first millennium was undoubtedly productive of much good ; it immensely enriched the different branches of Sanskrit literature which began to reflect the ideals and ideas of the individual and the race. But owing to the deep fascination for Sanskrit, society began to identify the educated man with the classical scholar as was the case in the Europe of the Renaissance-period. But when the best minds became engaged in expressing their thoughts in Sanskrit, Prakrits were naturally neglected. As long as Sanskrit was intelligible to the ordinary individual, this was not productive of much harm. But from about the 8th century A. D. Prakrits and vernaculars became widely differentiated from Sanskrit, and those who were using them began to find it difficult to understand the latter language. Hindu educationalists did not realise the importance of developing vernacular literatures in the interest of

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1. *Ibid*, p. 261.

the man in the street. Alberuni observes, "The language in India is divided into a *neglected vernacular one*, only in use among the common people, and a classical one, only in use among the upper and educated classes, which is much cultivated."<sup>1</sup> We no doubt come across a few cases from the 13th century onwards where provision was made for the teaching of Telugu, Canarese and Marathi in some of the schools and colleges of South India, but the general impression produced by a survey of the educational system and institutions is that society was not alive to the importance of the teaching and development of vernaculars in the interest of the spread of education among the masses. Things in India were however quite on a par with what they were in contemporary Europe, where Latin continued to be the medium of instruction down to the 17th century A. D. The classics dominated the curriculum of the Public Schools in England down to c. 1850 A. D., boys could write better Latin than English. In the 16th century school boys were punished for using the mother tongue, and its study could be started in Jesuitical schools only with the special permission of the Provincial.<sup>2</sup> India however could have been much in advance of the world ideas in this matter if the impetus that was given to the cultivation of vernaculars by the two gifted Seers, Mahavira and the Buddha, had not died down owing to the revival of Sanskrit.

**Depth at the cost of Breadth :** Hindu education was thorough, but it was not sufficiently broad. Each branch was thinking of its own problems. Educationalists do not seem to have bestowed much thought on the relative utility of the different bran-

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1. Sachau, I. p 18 Some poems and dramas were written in Prakrit, but their number was very small.

2. Quick : *The Essays*, p. 81.

ches like grammar; literature, logic, philosophy; mathematics and fine arts for the development of the intellect, the mind and the imagination. Specialisation was started too early. A broad-based secondary course embracing a study of grammar, literature, mathematics, astronomy and history did not exist. Subjects of aesthetic value like music and painting did not form part of the general course, as they did in ancient Greece. An undue emphasis was laid on grammar, literature and logic at the cost of history, mathematics and astronomy. Our education system no doubt preserved our ancient heritage, but was unable to understand its critical, comparative or historical importance; modern India had to learn it from western scholars. For more than a thousand years Indian Pandits were in the dark as to what was going on in the outside world in the different branches of scholarship. Here again the impartial historian has to point out that this defect of the Hindu educational system was not peculiar to India, but was to be seen all over the civilised world. In Europe all the energies of teachers and students were concentrated on grammar, rhetoric and dialectics down to the 13th century; only that much knowledge of arithmetic was given which was necessary to calculate Church festivals. Geography was ignored altogether till an incentive to its study was given by the discoveries of Columbus and Vasco de Gama. Natural sciences were introduced very reluctantly only by the middle of the last century.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Many sided interests were not create probably because it was difficult to maintain them in after life in an age when cheap books were unknown. Crowded curriculum also has its own evils as the Matriculation student knows to his cost.

2. In Germany, science was introduced in secondary education in 1816 A. D. When the Royal Commission on Education apologetically pleaded for the inclusion of science in the secondary courses in 1856, 10 or 12 lectures began to be given annually in some of the Public Schools in England. The Faculty of Science was established in the London University only in 1860.



**An unfair Comparison :** Some of the defects noted above like the neglect of the education of women and the masses crept into the Hindu Education System only in later times ; others like the non-existence of a broad-based secondary course and the neglect of the vernaculars were common to all the contemporary systems. The twentieth century critic often forgets that the West has gone on progressing rapidly during the last 300 years owing to the impetus it had received from the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Scientific Movement, while India has gone on deteriorating ever since 1000 A. D. owing to the almost continuous foreign rule and its natural consequences. The Muslim conquerors no doubt became domiciled in India, but they were on the whole unable to appreciate and encourage Hindu culture and education to any appreciable extent. The effects of the Muslim rule on the learning and scholarship of the Hindus can be described in the words of a Muslim himself. While describing the state of Hindu learning after the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni, Alberuni observes, "The present times are not of this kind; they are the very opposite ( because there is no royal support or encouragement to learning ), and therefore it is quite impossible that a new science or any new kind of research should arise in our days. *What we have of sciences is but the scanty remains of bygone better times*'.<sup>1</sup> Bernier, while describing the state of Hindu education in Banaras towards the middle of the 17th century, observes,<sup>2</sup> "Students stay for ten or twelve years during which the work of instruction proceeds but slowly, Feeling no spirit of emulation and entertaining no hope that honour or emoluments may be the reward of extraordinary attainments as with us, the scholars pursue the studies slowly, without much

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1. Sachau, I p. 252.

2. Bernier, *Travels in Moghul Empire*, p. 374.

to distract their attention." The Report of the Bengal Provincial Committee Education Commission, 1882, observes, 'The Mahomaden conquest proved disastrous to all indigenous educational institutions. The proprietary rights in land changed hands. The language of the court was changed. Indigenous learning lost most of its support; and after the classes had settled down, the well-to-do classes of the Hindus took gradually to the cultivation of foreign language, literature and manners. The *tols* were more and more deserted and left to those only, who wanted to learn the Hindu rituals. In course of time the Musalman teachers and schools drew off the community and the *tols* and the *pāthasālās* either died or barely managed to survive.'<sup>1</sup>

**A general estimate :** It is therefore hardly fair to compare 'the scanty remains of bye-gone better times' with the tremendous advance the West has made during the last century and a half under very favourable circumstances.<sup>2</sup> The impartial historian will have to note that in the hayday of her glory, education in India was broad-based, women and a large section of the masses being admitted to its privileges and advantages. It was able to develop character and personality, to inculcate civic virtues, and to turn out citizens well qualified to follow their professions and discharge their duties in life. It introduced a high standard of culture and emphasised the necessity of self-imposed discipline and stern regard for duty. It was not only able to preserve the heritage of the past but also to enrich it from generation to generation. It

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1. P. 2.

2. The historically correct procedure would be to compare Hindu Sanskrit learning at the advent of the British rule with the scholarship of the Christian monks who kept the lamp of learning burning during the Dark Ages. If such a comparison is instituted, India will have nothing to be afraid of.

produced a galaxy of able scholars and thinkers from age to age, who made important contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the spheres of philosophy, logic, mathematics, astronomy, medicine and chemistry. It enabled India to achieve high material prosperity by the excellent arrangements it made for training young men in commerce, industry and fine and useful arts. The general principles, which underlay the system,—*e.g.*, intellectual freedom, individual attention to students, the monitorial system, *gurukula* ideal, plain living and high thinking, mass education, combination of useful and liberal education, the locating of educational institutions away from the din and dust of the city-life, etc. are inherently sound and capable of yielding excellent results even in modern time, if applied with due regard to changed circumstances.

## CHAPTER XII

### A HISTORICAL SURVEY.

General introduction—Division of history in four periods—  
Conditions in the Vedic Age—Conditions in the Age of the  
Upanishads—Conditions in the Age of the Dharmasāstras—  
Conditions in the Age of the Purāṇas and Nibandhas.

**Introduction :** In the course of the last eleven chapters, we finished the history of the origin and development of the different branches of education in ancient India. We devoted separate chapters to topics like primary education, professional education, female education, etc. and traced the development of each topic from age to age. This treatment must have enabled the reader to visualise clearly the development and vicissitudes that took place in each branch of education. For a proper understanding of the subject it is however desirable that the reader should get a clear picture of the educational conditions as a whole in the successive periods of ancient Indian history. We therefore propose to devote the present chapter for this purpose. Such a treatment will be particularly useful for the general reader, who desires to have a bird's eye view of the subject and wants to grasp at a glance the changes that were taking place from age to age.

**Four Periods :** We shall divide Ancient Indian History into four periods for the purpose of this survey. The first period will be from pre-historic times to c. 1,000 B. C. It may be conveniently described as the Vedic age, as most of the Vedic literature was composed during this period. The second period will extend from c. 1,000 B. C. to c. 200 B. C. It may be described as the age of the Upanishads, the Sūtras and Epics, as these works are usually assigned to this age. The Bārhadra-

thas, the Baimbikas, the Nandas and the Mauryas were the leading political powers of this period and so the age may be conveniently described as the age of the Nandas and Mauryas. The third period will extend from c. 200 B. C. to c. 500 A. D. It may be described as the age of the Dharmaśāstra, as most of the leading works on this subject were written during this period. It can also be described as the age of the Śūngas and the Śātavāhanas, the Vākāṭakas and the Guptas, as these were the leading political powers of the period, The fourth period will extend from c. 500 A. D. to c. 1,200 A. D. It may be described as the age of the Purāṇas and digests ( Nibandhas ), as society was guided mainly by the theories and practices recommended in these works. Politically India was divided into many small kingdoms during this age. Kings Harsha and Bhoja were the most prominent rulers during this period. The age therefore may be described as the age of Harsha and Bhoja. We shall now proceed to describe the condition of education as a whole in each of these four periods.

### THE VEDIC PERIOD

( Upto c. 1,000 B. C. )

The Vedic age marks the beginning of the Indian culture, literature and science. The Vedic Aryans had a keen desire to make progress in the realms of knowledge and science. It was well realised that the intellectual equipment and efficiency were the corner stone of the human progress. One Vedic hymn points how all normal persons are outwardly equal, having the same number of hands and feet and eyes and ears; it is the intellectual brilliance and efficacy which constitutes the supremacy of one individual over the other. Importance of education was sought to be emphasised by pointing out that gods befriend only those who are wise and learned.

What then were the steps taken by society to ensure that proper education was imparted to the rising generation? It laid down that every person, whether

male or female, should undergo a period of training and discipline called Brahmacharya during the childhood and adolescence, when he or she should be initiated into sacred literature and trained in the family profession. It was pointed out that even gods cannot escape the discipline of Brahmacharya; it was owing to its efficacy that they eventually became immortal. The Vedic age had a firm conviction that no person can become a great scholar, a successful administrator, a skilful mechanic or a prosperous merchant, who had not received proper education. And a young maiden also could hope to get a proper match only if she satisfied the same condition.

- Women's Education :** The theory of a later age that women were ineligible for the Vedic studies was altogether unknown in the Vedic period. The authors of some of the
- Vedic hymns are women themselves, e. g., Viśvavarā, Sikatā, Nivāvarī, Ghoshā, Lopāmudrā and Apālā. Man could perform Vedic sacrifices only when there was his wife by his side to co-operate with him; she had to recite a number of Vedic verses and had therefore to learn them by heart. Her education was thus a religious necessity.

**Agency of Education :** The beginning of education was marked by a ritual called Upanayana, meaning going near ( a teacher ) ; it was regarded as constituting the second or spiritual birth of the individual. Is it possible to express society's concern for education in a more effective manner in a predominantly religious age.

- As in most early societies, it was the father who used to educate his children. The professional teacher had not yet come into prominence and the public school, with which we are now so familiar, had not yet come into existence. Education was still far from complex ;
- on the literary side it meant memorising of Vedic hymns and a few heroic ballads ; on the professional side it meant the training of the younger generation, usually in the family profession. The father or some other male

member of the patriarchal family could well do the needful in this connection.

**Subjects and Methods of Study :** The Vedic age did not regard the hymns as revealed; they were composed in contemporary times by living poets. Many of them perished in the course of time and some of them were eventually preserved because they happen to be included in the compilation made in a later age. Hymns were therefore studied as popular religious literature; it was enough if one could recite them without much inaccuracy. The custom of learning them very meticulously, remembering the accent and intonation of every word, had not yet come into existence.

The art of writing was probably unknown in this age; hymns therefore had to be studied from the lips of the teacher and not from the pages of a book. Great importance had to be attached to memorisation; otherwise the literature could not be preserved at all. Educational system however did not encourage mechanical cramming; it was particular that students should know the meaning of the hymns they were memorising. Persons who did not know the meaning of what they were reciting were compared to the pillars of a building, which can hardly be described as using it; they merely support the weight of the superstructure. Goddess of learning, it was averred, discloses her charm only to those who can interpret what they recite.

Great importance was attached to the development of the intellect. A special ritual named *medhā-janana* (fostering of intellect) was performed for this purpose soon after the Upanayana ritual, when a prayer was offered that the student should be favoured with an intelligence as attractive as the cows, as vigorous as the studs and as brilliant as the solar rays; it was hoped that it would be effective in spiritual, material and mechanical spheres. Mere intelligence however was not regarded as sufficient, for it may be only receptive. It

was essential that the intellect should be creative ; in the daily prayer offered in the morning and evening, it was prayed that the sun should *stimulate* the intellect in order to make it *creative*.

Particular care was taken to develop debating powers among the students ; those who won laurels in debates were highly applauded. It is interesting to note that a hope has been expressed in the marriage hymn that even the bride should be able to make a mark as a public speaker.

**Efficiency of Education :** An education system, which aimed at making the intellect creative, naturally produced persons with an open, free and enquiring mind, who were eager to explore new realms of knowledge.

- The mystery of the creation of the world exercised the thoughts of many ; one philosopher boldly enquires whether gods themselves know the solution of the problem. Astronomy engaged the attention of some scholars, and the age can claim the credit for having discovered the necessity of interposing an intercalatary month in order to equalise the lunar with the solar year. Some planets were distinguished from ordinary stars, and a few lunar mansions were also identified.

**Useful Education :** Arts and crafts were not held in low esteem ; the legend asserts that the Ribhus and the Agvins were raised to divinity because of their skill as artisans and doctors respectively. We have shown already how literary education was imparted to girls as well as to boys. The same seems to have been the case with the education in arts and crafts. The Vedic language has a number of words for female weavers, female bow-makers, female arrow-makers etc., which later on disappear from use. This would tend to show that women in the Vedic age like those in the Homeric one, were economically valuable members of the society, engaged in wealth production.



**Conclusion :** We may state in conclusion that the Education System of the Vedic age produced youths and maidens well grounded in religious and literary lore, strong in intellect and efficient in the family profession. It also produced men of action, as may be inferred from the rapid spread of the Aryan culture and supremacy.

### THE UPANISHAD-SŪTRA PERIOD

( C. 1,200 B.C. to 200 B. C. )

**General Condition :** Education continued to be regarded as the most vital factor for the well being of the society in this period also. In order to ensure its wide prevalence, the Upanayana ritual, which marked the beginning of the Vedic education, was made obligatory for all the Aryans. This helped the preservation of the Vedic literature and culture. Vedic literature became very extensive during this period and rituals more complicated ; a number of new branches of learning like grammar, philology, prosody and philosophy were coming into existence ; it therefore no longer became possible for an average father even in the cultured sections of society to educate his children at home. The professional teacher, who was usually of the priestly class, as was the case in most early societies, now became a special feature of the educational system. The ideal teacher was to be both a man of character and a scholar of repute. He was to receive the highest reverence from society. He was to stipulate for no fees but to be content with such presents as may be given to him at the end of the education course by his students or their families. This system ensured that the poorest in the society would receive the benefit of education, The student was required to help the teacher in his household and farm work in his spare time. In the case of students who were giving a liberal fee to the teacher for the education they received, the

household work was naturally nominal. Night classes were often arranged for those poor students, who were too busy to attend to the classes by day on account of their work on the farm. Each teacher used to have not more than 10 to 15 students who usually lived in his house; separate school buildings probably were rare. The schools had two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

**Method of Teaching :** A great revolution took place in the method of teaching the Vedic literature during period. It was now regarded as revealed and was therefore to be preserved with meticulous care both with regard to the accent and intonation of its words. Great emphasis therefore began to be given both on its correct memorisation as well as proper pronunciation. Considerable time of the student was naturally spent in this task. Vedic students of this age however were generally able to understand the meaning of the hymns they recited. The Vedic idiom was not yet much different from the spoken tongue. A student had to spend about twelve years to master the Vedic literature and the rituals connected with it. The art of writing was certainly well known in India by c. 800 B. C. ; but its services could not be much utilised in the cause of education owing to the absence of paper and printing. Books were written on birch leaves and were very fragile; they were beyond the means of the average teacher or student. Students therefore had to learn by heart a number of important texts in their subjects from the lips of their teachers and not the pages of a book. Care however was always taken to see that they understood the meaning of what they could recite.

Students of the new branches of learning that had developed during this period like grammar, sacred law, philosophy etc. used to devote only two or three years to the study of the Vedic hymns necessary for their

daily duties and devote about eight or nine years for the specialisation in their particular subjects.

**Female Education :** Society continued to give proper attention to the education of women during the first half of this period. Their Upanayana was performed regularly and was followed by some amount of Vedic education. The epics show that even Kshatriya ladies like Kauṣalyā could perform the Vedic sacrifices with the proper recitation of the hymns all by themselves. Some ladies like Vāchaknavī and Maitreyī used to take interest in the dry subject of philosophy. Lady scholars of the age like Sulabhā, Vadavā, Prathiteyī, Maitreyī and Gārgī seem to have made real contribution to the advancement of knowledge, for they enjoy the rare privilege of being included in the galaxy of distinguished scholars, to whom a tribute of gratitude was to be daily paid by every student at the time of the prayer. When there was such a large number of well educated women in society, it was but natural that there should be a regular class of women teachers. A new word was coined in Sanskrit language to distinguish them from wives of teachers. Naturally women teachers used to undertake the education of girls, though sometimes they must have taught boys also. In the majority of cases, however, girls were taught at home by their elders like father, brothers or uncles.

The female education began to receive a gradual setback by c. 500 B. C. owing to various factors, which need not be discussed here, the marriage age of girls began to be gradually lowered; society began to feel that they should not remain unmarried much beyond the age of 14 or 15. The sacred initiation, which took place at about the age of 10 or 11, could not therefore be followed by an adequate course of serious education. In course of time, in most cases Upanayana became a mere formality, unrelated to any educational course, to be gone through just before the marriage of the girl.

**Refreshers' Course :** The phenomenon of students forgetting what they learn during their schools and colleges was not unknown in ancient India. The educationalists tried to counteract it during this period by laying down that every householder should devote the monsoon time ( July to October ) for a recapitulation of what he had learnt as a student. Some went further and pleaded that mere recapitulation at home was not sufficient, the householder should have a refresher course during this period at the teacher's house. This latter view did not naturally become popular.

**Useful Education :** Most of the professions were tending to become hereditary and professional education was also usually given in the family itself. The students from the warrior, trader and farmer classes learnt a few Vedic hymns after their Upanayana and then devoted their time and energy to their hereditary profession. At famous educational centres like Taxila, however, there used to be specialists not only in humanities but also in medicine, archery and military science, astronomy, music, dancing, etc., who used to draw students from far and wide. The training imparted in arts, crafts and professions was fairly efficient and helped to raise the skill of the artisans.

**A creative age :** The educational system continued to lay emphasis on the development of the creative intellect in the scholar and the age was successful in considerably extending the bounds of knowledge. The period we are surveying can justly be regarded as the most creative epoch of Indian culture, literature, arts and sciences. The foundation of whatever is best in Hindu thought and glorious in Hindu achievements were laid down during this period. Metaphysics made remarkable progress as is evidenced by the Upnaishadic, Bauddha and Jain works. The beginnings of almost all the later systems of philosophy can be traced to this period. Philology and

grammar were well developed and literary activity in the legal literature commenced. Speculations in the realm of political thought were fruitful. Astronomy, and mathematics, medicine and surgery and mining and metallurgy began to be cultivated. The intellectual outlook nourished by the educational method was thus remarkably fruitful.

### THE DHARMAŚĀSTRA PERIOD

( C. 200 B. C. to 500 A. D. )

**Conception of Education :** It is in the works of this period that we begin to get a systematic discussion of the aims and methods of education. The views expressed in them may however be taken to be generally true of the earlier and later centuries as well. Education was regarded essentially as a process of illumination. Knowledge is the third eye of man, as it were, which gives him a correct insight into the affairs of the world. True education shatters illusions, removes difficulties, enables a person to realise the value of life and become a respectable and self-supporting citizen. As an agency of improvement, its value cannot be over-estimated. It is not merely other-worldly ; it no doubt initiates a person into religious and philosophical studies, but it also enables him to earn a livelihood and discharge properly his duties as a responsible citizen. In a word, education transforms and illumines our nature by promoting a progressive and harmonious development of our physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual powers and faculties.

**Time for Commencement :** It was vitally necessary that education should begin at the proper time, which was taken to be 5 or 6 for primary education and 10 or 11 for the higher education. A boy who begins his education, say at the age of 16, was not likely to bring credit to his teachers. During our childhood mind is

pliable, and intellect receptive; it is only at this time that it is possible to form good habits that may be of lifelong use to us.

**Physical Punishment :**—Education was not merely a passive process, it would be successful in producing good results only when full and voluntary cooperation comes forth from the student. What is a teacher to do if such cooperation is not forthcoming? Educationalists of ancient India were not unanimous on this point, some pleaded for persuasion and reasoning. Others however recognised that when this method failed, a limited amount of physical punishment should be imposed.

**Importance of Routine :** Ancient Indian educationalists laid particular emphasis on routine and habits. Rules of discipline were framed both for the purpose of prohibiting a student from undesirable acts and for forming good and valuable habits. It was realised that association and imitation play an important role in moulding the character and improving the calibre of the student. The *gurukul* system was therefore encouraged, as it brought a large number of students to live together under the superintendence of an inspiring teacher. The practice of entrusting junior classes to advanced brilliant students placed before the beginners an ideal to imitate.

**Rules of Discipline :** Rules of discipline prescribed for the student give a good glimpse of the educational methods and ideals. Prayers had to be offered daily, morning and evening, in order to infuse a spirit of piety. Proper courtesy had to be shown to teachers and seniors in order to inculcate good manners and etiquette. Lying, slandering and backbiting were prohibited in order to promote moral seriousness and earnestness. Celibacy was recommended to promote physical and moral strength. The use of meats, sweetmeats, spices, garlands, etc, was tabooed, because it was felt that a student who could successfully overcome his natural predilections for

such things would be developing a good strength of mind. Plain living and high thinking was encouraged by prohibiting the use of gaudy dress and minimising the use of shoes, umbrellas, etc. Like the students of the medieval Europe, those of ancient India also were required to live by begging. The rule was relaxed in the case of well-to-do students; but even they had to go through the formality of begging at least once a week. This practice taught the student humility and made him realise that it was due to the help and sympathy of the society that he was being enabled to learn a profession as also the culture of his race. This rule obliterated the distinction between the rich and the poor and brought education within the reach of all.

**Role of Individual Teacher :** Teachers continued to remain the backbone of the educational system ; educational institutions began to be evolved only towards the fag end of this period. Though very high veneration was paid to the teacher, it is interesting to notice that the education system did not make any provision of training him for his profession. Teachers' Training Colleges, which were unknown till the 19th century, were however unnecessary in the ancient Indian system of education. As already pointed out above, advanced brilliant students were always given opportunities to teach junior classes; the system being one-teacher-school system, this was inevitable. Students therefore used to get actual experience in teaching while they were at school. During their advanced courses students had to take part in a number of debates, when they were called upon to defend their own position and attack that of their opponents. Powers of exposition and discussion were thus developed. This along with the actual experience in practical teaching rendered Teachers' Training Colleges almost superfluous.

**Canonisation of Vedas :** Veneration for the Vedic literature increased as more centuries rolled on, and

extraordinary precautions were introduced in this period to preserve its purity and correctness. In the case of the Vedic hymns the student had to memorise not only the *samhitāpāṭha*, but also the *padapāṭha*, *kramapāṭha*, *jatāpāṭha* and *ghanapāṭha*.. It thus became beyond the capacity of an average student to memorise the vast Vedic literature in this way and also to understand and expound its meaning, especially as the Vedic dialect had now gone out of vogue and had become unintelligible. The average Vedic student could therefore now only recite the Vedic texts ; only a few experts could interpret them.

**Place of Memorisation :** Paper being still unknown and plam-leaf books being very costly, the students of non-Vedic branches also had to commit important texts to memory. Recitation and recapitulation thus formed an important part of the daily routine of the student life both at school and at home. As a result the memory of the average student used to be highly developed ; he could perform feats of memorising, which we may now regard as impossible. I-sing, the Buddhist Chinese traveller ( 675 A. D. ), rather obscurely refers to certain aids to memory, owing to which after the practice of ten or fifteen days, the student felt his thoughts rising like a fountain and could commit to memory whatever he had heard but once, 'This is not a myth,' says the Chinese traveller, 'for I myself have met such men.' Learning in ancient times had to be at the tip of the tongue; a scholar asking for time to consult his notes would cut a very sorry figure. As a convenient aid to memory, the educational system began to encourage writing of books on most subjects including even grammar, astronomy, mathematics, medicine and dictionaries in the metrical or the aphorismic form.

**Place of Exposition :** Exposition was a salient feature of teaching in the case of all the non-Vedic subjects. The teaching of the works on subjects like philosophy, logic,



law, grammar etc., was always accompanied by extensive lectures, discussing exhaustively the views and opinions supported and controverted. In these discussions there was an unravelling of the subject matter, distinctions and contradistinctions were drawn, doubts were raised and answered and the final position established. the Chinese pilgrims particularly praise Indian teachers for their unsurpassed ability in explaining difficult passages and offering illuminating suggestions on doubtful points.

**Dialogue and Parables :** The dialogue method was followed by many a teacher, as would appear from the evidence of the Upanishads and Buddhist Sūtras, which are often in the form of a continuous argument between the teacher and the student. This method is very valuable, as it enables a teacher to ascertain the reactions in the student's mind to his own suggestions, theories and observations. The use of the parable was often made in expounding obscure principles, especially to juniors. The well known books, *Hitopadeśa* and *Pañcatantra*, written to educate young princes in the principles of the statecraft, are in the forms of parables and fables.

**Individual Attention :** The average teacher's class continued to have not more than ten to fifteen students throughout the ancient Indian period. This rendered individual attention possible, which was the strongest point in the education system. Lectures to large classes of 100 or 125 students, which are unintelligible to some, superfluous to a few and useful to the rest, were unknown to the ancient system of education. As each student received individual attention, he could not go to the class unprepared. There was a daily examination of every student, and no new lesson was taught until the old one was mastered. There were no annual examinations followed by mass promotions and detentions. Clever students were not compelled to mark time for their dull companions, as often happens in the modern system of

education. If student was industrious and intelligent, he could finish his education earlier. The idle and careless students had not as easy a prospect of a merry college life, as he has in the present age. The Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang, ( c. 640 A. D. ) says, 'When disciples, intelligent and accute, are addicted to idle shirking, teachers doggedly persevere in repeating instructions until their training is finished.'

**Monitorial System :** As already observed, the help and cooperation of advanced students were enlisted in order to make personal attention possible. At the famous educational centre of Taxila, prince Sutasoma, for instance, who had acquired proficiency earlier, was entrusted with the teaching of the heir-apparent of the Banaras kingdom. About the students of the University of Valabhi ( in Kathiawar ), the Chinese pilgrim I-tsing observes that they used to pass two or three years 'instructed by their teachers and instructing others'. Senior students at Taxila were often put in charge of their schools during the temporary absence of their teachers. This method of entrusting a part of the teaching work to brilliant and competent students had a great educational value. It placed a high incentive before the students. It afforded opportunities to 'intelligent students to learn the art of teaching, and thus dispensed with the need of Teachers' Training Colleges. It increased the efficiency and decreased the cost of education by rendering individual attention possible and by affording intelligent and free assistance to the teacher. It is well known that Bell and Lancaster had based their monitorial system on what one of them had observed in contemporary Indian schools at Madras.

**Place of Examination :** The Indian educational system did not prescribe any periodical or annual examinations. As observed already, a new lesson was given only when the teacher was satisfied that the old

one had been mastered. The end of the education course was not marked by any lengthy or exhaustive examination, but by the pupil reciting and explaining the last lesson. No degrees or diplomas were given; the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang refers to students 'stealing the name of Nalanda' in order to gain more respect. The system of awarding diplomas appears to have been evolved only at some rare Universities like Vikramaśilā during the next period.

**Critical Reflection :** The period we are reviewing here may be regarded as an age of critical reflection and specialisation and Sanskrit education now acquired the characteristic thoroughness which it continued to possess ever since. The educational system from now onwards aimed not at imparting a general knowledge of a number of subjects but at turning out scholars who would be experts in different branches like Philosophy, Mathematics, Law, Purāṇas, etc. The course however was not yet too narrow or specialised, as it became during the next period. A specialist in poetics of classical literature had a good knowledge of epics or the sacred law. An expert in one system of philosophy usually was fairly conversant with the special features of other schools of philosophy as well.

**Non-Vedic Studies :** Non-Vedic studies became fairly popular in this period. The age had remarkable achievements to its credit in the realms of philosophy, law, epic literature, classical Sanskrit, poetics, astronomy, mathematics, etc.; these new branches were naturally studied more eagerly than the Vedic literature, which though regarded as revealed, was not easily intelligible and expounded a religious system, which was rapidly going out of vogue.

**Primary Education :** We did not refer to primary education so far because in its modern sense it probably did not exist much earlier than 400 B. C. The art of

writing being not much in use before this time, what may be called the primary education, say in the Vedic school, consisted of training the ear of the student in distinguishing between the short and long vowels and the different kinds of accents, which had to be accurately pronounced while reciting the Vedic hymns. At a little later stage he was taught the rules about the changes that took place in the original words when they were combined in the Vedic stanzas. During the present period, however, the primary education in the sense of a knowledge of the 3 R's came into existence. It included a knowledge of Sanskrit phonetics and elementary grammar also. A new ritual was evolved to mark its beginning, named *Vidyārambha* or the beginning of education. We of this age will find it difficult to visualise the methods of primary education when paper and cheap books were not available to impart it. Boys of the rich used to write on the wooden boards with some kind of colour. Poorer students used to learn writing on ground covered with dust or sand. Not pencils but fingers and pointed sticks were used for writing. The teacher used to write one letter on the board and the boys used to shout out its name, as they went on writing it on the sand or dust-covered ground. When the entire alphabet was well mastered, teachers used to write on a palm leaf with an iron stile and hand over the leaf to the pupil for tracing the letters on the same leaf with charcoal ink, which was rubbed out at the end. The same palm leaf could thus serve as a model for a number of days and students. Later on students were asked to write on plantain leaves first and then on palm-leaves. Recitation of the multiplication tables by the whole class, following the lead given by the teacher or the monitor, was a characteristic feature in the daily routine. Elementary Sanskrit grammar was taught through metrical books which rendered the memorising easy. This method of primary education persisted till the end of the next period, nay, down to the end of the 18th century.

**Women's Education :** During this period the marriageable age of girls was lowered down to 12 and women were pronounced to be ineligible for Vedic studies. This gave a great set-back to their education. Girls in cultured and rich families used to receive Sanskrit education, but their number was naturally limited. Private tutors were often appointed for them.

**Apprenticeship System :** Vedic education of non-Brahmin classes became now a mere formality; this gave a set-back to their cultural education. Their training began to become narrower and more specialised.

The non-Brahmins used to follow a number of arts and crafts, which had become generally hereditary long before this period. Normally parents and guardians used to train their wards in their family professions. An apprentice system of training was also evolved now, which continued during the succeeding age as well. Under this method a trainee agreed to work under his craft-teacher for a fixed period of years, which was generally longer than the period required to master the craft thoroughly. The teacher used to defray all the expenses connected with the boarding, lodging and training of the apprentice. In the course of time the student used to get efficient in the craft and fit enough to undertake jobs to be executed in cooperation with the teacher or even independently. He had however to surrender all his earnings to his master till the end of the agreed period. Students were trained to make their own tools also.

**Training in Painting :** In order to give an idea of the various stages of the training of an apprentice, we shall give here the example of a trainee in painting. He was first given a practice in drawing lines and curves, then conventional motifs and ornaments. Next he would try his hand on mythological beings and lastly on designs with men and beasts. The master would of course take the apprentice to help him in his work in mansions,

palaces or temples. At first the apprentice would only grind the colours, then prime the surfaces, then apply ground colours and finally fill in the outlines sketched by his master.

**Medical Education :** Medical education started with a special religious ritual of initiation and was open to all the classes. Texts had naturally to be committed to memory here as in other branches of knowledge, but a person having only a verbal knowledge of the medical texts and not knowing their proper use, was compared to a donkey, conscious of the heaviness, but not of the quality of the weight it carries. Specialisation was encouraged ; students were required to master the different branches of the science from different experts. Steps were taken to give practical training in surgery and medicine. Surgery students used to dissect corpses and learn puncturing on the veins of dead animals, scarrification on stretched pieces of leather, the manner of holding the probes on dry Alābu fruits, etc. The novice was then gradually initiated into real cases and allowed to extract darts, cleanse wounds and use the knife in cutting and piercing the diseased parts of the body. Students of medicine were to attend the cases that were being treated by their teachers in their private practice. If there were hospitals in the locality, as was the case in big cities like Patna ( Pāṭaliputra ), they would naturally take their advantage. Unfortunately we do not know much of the hospital organisation. But it is clear that it must have been quite good, when compared by the contemporary standards, because Indian physicians were invited by the Abbaside Khalifas in the 8th century to organise their own hospitals. The medical course seems to have extended over eight years. This method of training continued during the next period also with this modification that the training in surgery became progressively rarer. The duration of the course also was reduced to about six years.

**Skill in Crafts :** The training in arts, crafts and professions was fairly efficient. It helped to raise the general level of skill and workmanship. Indian artisans took no time to prepare sponges in imitation of those they saw being used by the Greek soldiers of Alexander the Great ; they manufactured them with threads and wool and then dyed them. The muslins of India were in heavy demand all over the world. The sculptures and paintings of the period and the famous Iron pillar near Kutub Minar, New Delhi, proclaim the skill of the sculptor, the painter and the metallurgist.

**Rational Outlook :** The remarkable intellectual achievements of the age, as attested to by the progress in literature, philosophy, poetics, mathematics, astronomy, etc., were largely due to its rational intellectual outlook and method. Works of earlier writers were no doubt revered, but they were not regarded as infallible. The age skilfully combined a regard for old traditions with a realisation of the value of new discoveries. Vedic religion was silently allowed to be superseded by the Pauranic religion. Later Buddhist philosophers similarly discarded the Hīnayāna for the Mahāyāna system of philosophy. Later Smṛitis like Yājñavalkya gave canonical sanction to new customs like the widow's right of inheritance. Geographical considerations did not stand in the progress of knowledge; Hindu astronomers studied Greek works and improved their systems by the knowledge thus obtained. The achievements of this age are as remarkable in the sphere of humanities as in that of arts and sciences.

## PAURANIC PERIOD

( c. 500 A. D. to 1200 A. D. )

**General Introduction .** The observations made in the last section about the nature and methods of education with reference to the higher, primary and

professional education substantially hold good about this period also, and need not therefore be repeated here.

Female education received a further set back as the marriageable age of girls was further lowered to eight or nine; only girls in rich and cultured families used to receive education in classical Sanskrit and fine arts through special tutors appointed for them.

Professional education became more and more divorced from literary and cultural education as the latter was imparted through Sanskrit, which was no longer understood by the masses. Arts and crafts were now regarded as plebian and bycotted by the higher sections of society; as the services of the best intellect were no longer available for their development; they ceased to make much progress. Growing orthodoxy of the age disapproved dissection and condemned agriculture on the ground that it involved the killing of insects at the time of ploughing. Primary education did not receive proper attention and development owing to the concentration of all effort on the cultivation of Sanskrit, which had now become a dead language. No effort was made to develop literature suitable for the primary schools in the different vernaculars.

**Corporate Institutions :** The rise of corporate institutions for higher studies is the most noteworthy development of this period. They were first developed in connection with Buddhism probably towards the end of the 5th century A. D. Buddhist rules of discipline required a novice to be under the superintendence of a senior monk for ten years and learn from him the sacred literature, which presupposed a good grounding in Pali, Sanskrit, logic and philosophy. When Buddhist monasteries developed into big establishments, they naturally became centres of Buddhist learning, primarily intended for Buddhist monks and novices. But Buddhism soon realised that an effective hold over the popular mind could be obtained only by undertaking the education of the laity as well. This important



step seems to have been taken only by about the end of the 5th century A. D. About 10% of the Buddhist monasteries were educational institutions of the standard of undergraduate college during the present period. Hinduism soon took a lesson from this development and started its temple colleges at about the 8th century A. D. Records accidentally preserved disclose the existence of about a dozen such colleges in South India. It may well be presumed that most of the well endowed temples used to maintain colleges for higher Sanskritic studies from c. 8th century, as was actually the case at the beginning of the 19th century A. D.

**New educational Atmosphere :** The rise of the corporate educational institutions had a profound influence on the educational practice and method. Courses began to be fixed by governing bodies ; they were no longer dependent upon individual inclinations. Formerly students had the advantage of association with only about a dozen students studying the same subject under one teacher ; now he became a member of an educational colony where scores of teachers and hundreds of students were living together, engaged in the study of diverse subjects like different branches of philosophy, law, literature, mathematics, astronomy etc. Usually arrangements were made at temple colleges and monastic universities for the free boarding and lodging of students. Saved from the worry of begging, they could now devote themselves more exclusively to the prosecution of their studies. About the students at Nālandā University, Yuan Chwang observes, 'Learning and discussing they found the day too short; day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping each other to perfection.' Of one of the Hindu centres of education, an epigraphical record says, 'Brahmaṇas were reading the Vedas, Śāstras, the six systems of philosophy; every group

was either reading the Vedas, or engaged in the exposition of some higher sciences, or carrying on ceaseless discussion on logic or joyously reciting the Purāṇas or settling the meanings of the drama, the Smṛitis or poetry.' There was thus a really university atmosphere in these new centres of education. Some of them like Nālandā and Vikramaśīlī became educational centres of international fame attracting students from almost all Buddhist countries in Eastern and Central Asia. The traffic was not however only one way; we find many of the alumni of Nālandā and Vikramaśīlī going to Tibet, China and Central Asia and spreading Indian culture there. Most of the corporate educational centres had big libraries, usually unavailable with the individual teacher. Students studying at them had much better facilities for reading.

**Deterioration in Education :** The real University atmosphere at these new centres of education undoubtedly gave a stimulus to the cause of higher education and produced many great scholars and authors, some with international fame. Unfortunately however certain new developments were taking place in the intellectual method and outlook, which were producing harmful results. Specialisation began to be carried too far in the course of time; the logician, the rhetorician and the mathematician knew their own subjects thoroughly but were unacquainted with the problems and achievements of one another. Reverence for the past became so deep that theories began to be accepted or rejected according as they were in conformity with or opposed to the statements of the sacred books on the point concerned. Astronomers like Brahmagupta began to condemn the scientific explanation of eclipses being due to the moon coming in the shadow of the earth or in between the earth and the sun on the ground that they were at variance with the statements in the canonical works ascribing the eclipses to the head of demon Rāhu or Ketu devouring the moon or the sun. Scholars of the earlier age welcomed light

even from foreigners like the Greeks. According to the scholars of the later part of this period, to quote Alberuni ( 1030 A. D. ), 'there was no country but theirs, no other race of men but theirs,...that have any knowledge of science whatever. Their haughtiness is such that if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khorasan or Persia, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar.' Alberuni's picture may be to some extent overdrawn; but it is substantially correct. By. c. 900 A.D. Hindu education had ceased to prejudices, explode superstitions and broaden the mind so as to make it capable of receiving instructions from all quarters.

**Age of Commentators :** Hindu intellect, which was once remarkably creative, had now become merely receptive and imitative. Probably the heritage of the past had become so great that all the ability of the scholars was exhausted in preserving it. The theory of the Kali age condemned the present as an age of sin and darkness; it began to be instinctively held that not much good could be expected from it. The golden age of inspiration was gone; no new achievements were now possible; the best that the age could do was to preserve, expound and comment on the masterpieces of the past. The Medieval Age was unfavourable for the formation of independent intellect both in the East and the West. The Indian Educational system was now unable to create minds powerful enough to rise above the prevailing theories sanctioned by the canonical literature and strike new paths. It could no longer reconcile respect for the past with a regard for the needs of the present or the future.

**Vernaculars neglected :** When Sanskrit was the spoken or the easily understood tongue, as was the case down to c. 500 A.D., it was natural to treat it as a medium of instruction in the higher studies. When this ceased to be the case in the course of

time, vernaculars should have been made the media of instruction. This was not done by the educational system, and as a consequence the masses were cut off from the intellectual illumination and the period thus became a Dark Age.

**Achievements :** Let us now take a resume of the achievements and failures of the educational system, whose methods and intellectual outlook we have discussed so far. Formation of character, development of personality and the preservation and enrichment of the culture were its main aims and for many centuries the system was successful in achieving them. It infused piety and promoted integrity. The Greeks, the Chinese and the Arabs, who were the political or religious opponents of the Hindus, have all given unstinted praise to their character. 'Truth and virtue', says Megasthenes, 'they hold in high regard.' 'The Indians' says, Yuan Chwang, 'are of hasty and irresolute temperament, but of pure moral principles. They do not practice deceit.' Al Idrisi, ( 11th century A.D. ) says, 'The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions.' Hindu character deteriorated to some extent in the 17th and the 18th centuries owing to the long spell of foreign rule ; successful deceit is usually the most common defence of slave.

The educational system was successful in developing personality by eulogising the sense of self-respect, by encouraging the feeling of self-confidence, by inculcating the virtue, of self-restraint and by fostering the powers of discrimination and judgment. It laid stress on social duties and promoted social efficiency for several centuries. Its services in the preservation, enrichment and spread of Indian culture cannot be over-estimated. There are few countries in the world where so much of ancient literature has been preserved and where so much of its past lives in its present

even in the 20th century. The remarkable amount of cultural uniformity that is to be seen in the different parts of the Indian sub-continent is largely due to the successful preservation of ancient culture and literature. The success of Indian missionaries in spreading Hindu and Buddhist culture in South-East, Eastern and Central Asia must be attributed to the success of the educational system in enkindling a strong zest in the minds of the students for spreading national culture and heritage far and wide. Above all the system produced independent minds and creative intellects; there is hardly any other civilisation in the world, which went on making rich and diverse contributions to the different branches of knowledge for a long and continuous period of two thousand years.

**Defects :** The defects of the system have been partly indicated above. Infusion of piety gave a strong hold to religion in course of time. In India, as in Europe down the 17th century priests were the teachers and most of their students intended to follow the clerical career. This gradually tended to the supersession of reason by authority, especially after the 7th century A.D. It may be pointed out however that in Europe too, throughout the Middle Ages, rationalism was at a discount. There too educationalists at this time were engaged in expounding traditional theories and not in training independent minds capable of forming their own conclusions. Luther, who first vindicated the cause of reason, later became a renegade and condemned its use. It must be noted in fairness, that in ancient India, reason was given full scope by Hindu scholars for about 1500 years when it was later superseded by the exigencies of the religious situation by c. 500 A.D. The historian however cannot help regretting that supersession of reason should have taken place among a people, who had given full scope to it for so long a time.

**Neglect of Vernaculars :** Like European classical scholars of the Renaissance period, Indian scholars also became fascinated by the charm of the classical ( Sanskrit ) language from c. 400 A. D. Absorbed in the beauties of words and ideas, they neglected the world of nature and reality. Astronomy and mathematics, history and political science ceased to attract them. The revival of classical Sanskrit no doubt gave an intellectual unity not only to the entire country but also forged an intellectual tie that bound India with the Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. But eventually the ascendancy of Sanskrit produced a harmful result when it ceased to be intelligible to the masses owing to the emergence of the different provincial vernaculars at about 1,000 A. D. The society began to identify the educated man with the classical scholar, as was the case in Europe also during the Renaissance period. Afraid, like Bacon, that vernaculars may grow bankrupt any day, the Indian scholars of the medieval period were unwilling to express their thought in any but the classical Sanskrit language. Hindu educationalists did not realise the importance of developing vernaculars and making them the media of instruction. This retarded the progress of knowledge among the masses.

**No broad-based Course :** The depth and thoroughness of the Indian education in the medieval period was at the cost of breadth and cultural outlook. Not much thought was bestowed by the educational method upon the relative utility of the study of the different branches like grammar, literature, logic, philosophy, mathematics and fine arts for the development of mind, intellect and imagination. Specialisation was started too early. A broad-based course of secondary education including a study of literature, mathematics, history and political science did not exist in India as in contem-

porary times elsewhere. An undue emphasis was laid on grammar, literature and logic. In Medieval Europe too the situation was similar ; the energies of students were concentrated on cultivating grammar, rhetoric and dialectics ; only that much knowledge of arithmetic was imparted which was necessary to calculate the Church festivals. Geography was ignored altogether. Some of the defects enumerated above however crept into the system only in later times ; others were common to most systems of education in contemporary times.

**Unfavourable Circumstances :** The 20th century reader should not forget that the West has gone on progressing continuously from the time of Renaissance through Reformation to the Industrial Revolution. India on the other hand has gone on deteriorating continuously from c. 1,000 A. D. owing to the almost continuous prevalence of the foreign rule in the country. About the contemporary Hindu scholarship, Alberuni (c. 1030 A.D.) says 'What we have now of science is but the scanty remains of bygone better times.' These naturally appear to be poor, when compared to the advance of the West during the last three centuries.

**Final Estimate :** In the heyday of its glory, ancient Indian education was widely spread, women and a large section of the masses being admitted to its privileges. It was able to develop character and personality, to inculcate civic virtues, and turn citizens well qualified to follow their professions and discharge their duties in life. It was not only able to preserve the heritage of the past but also to enrich it from generation to generation. It produced a galaxy of able scholars and thinkers from age to age, who made important contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the spheres of philosophy, logic, mathematics, astronomy, medicine and chemistry. It enabled India to achieve high material prosperity

by the excellent arrangements it made for training young men in arts, crafts and professions. The general principles which underlay the system, e. g. plain living and high thinking, the intellectual freedom, individual attention to students, the monitorial system, *gurukula* (hostel) system, location of the educational institutions away from the din and dust of city life, are sound and capable of giving good results even in modern times, if applied with due regard to changed circumstances.



## APPENDIX I.

### EDUCATIONAL RITUALS.

Religion has deeply saturated Hindu life in almost all its phases and the sphere of education is no exception. Rituals connected with the student's life are many, and several aspects of educational theory and practice are illustrated by their study. For the benefit of advanced students of the subject, it is therefore proposed to devote this appendix to a critical survey and rationalistic interpretation of the important rituals connected with education.

#### SECTION A.

#### VIDYĀRAMBHA RITUAL (SANSKĀRA).<sup>1</sup>

**Its Time and Nature :** Vidyārambha Sanskāra, which is described by some authorities also as *Aksharasvikaraṇa*, was performed, as the name would suggest, at the commencement of the primary education. Fifth year, which is usually regarded as suitable for the beginning of the primary education, was the time prescribed for it.<sup>2</sup> If the ritual had to be postponed on account of unavoidable difficulties, it had to be performed at least before the Upanayana (Initiation or Thread ceremony).<sup>3</sup> An auspicious day was selected for the purpose. The ritual was a simple

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1. The original authorities for the information given in this section are the following:—*Vāramitrodaya*. Sanskāraprakāśa, pp. 321 ff; *Aparārka* on *Yājñavalkya-smṛti* I. 13; *Smṛtichandrikā*, Sanskāra-kāṇḍa, pp. 67 ff; *Sanskāraratna-mālā* of Gopīnāthabhaṭṭa.

2. *Bismilla* Khanī ceremony, which the Muslims perform at the beginning of the primary education, is also performed in the 5th year, or to be more correct, on the 4th day of the fourth month of the fifth year. It was performed on this day in the case of Humayun; *J. A. S. B.*, 1935, p. 249.

3. द्वितीयजन्मनः पूर्वमारभेताक्षरासुन्धीः । Brihaspati in *VMS*.

one, requiring the young boy to worship Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, Vināyaka, the god of learning and the tutelary deities of his family. Some authorities prescribe a sacrifice, but probably it was not performed everywhere. The worship of the deities was followed by that of the primary teacher and the boy was then handed over to him. The teacher used to make the boy write on rice all the alphabets with the help of a specially prepared golden or silver pen. Suitable presents made to the teacher and the Brahmanas invited for the ceremony marked the termination of the ritual. Students studying before Upanayana were known as Daṇḍamānavakas.

**The Ritual non-existent in early Times : why :** *Vidyārambha* is thus the earliest Sanskāra in the student's life, but it does not, like Upanayana go back to hoary antiquity. The authorities, which prescribe and describe this ritual, are as late as the second millennium of the Christian era.<sup>1</sup> It appears indeed very strange that the earlier works like the *Gṛihya-sūtras* and the *Dharma-sūtras*, which have laid down rituals for such relatively insignificant occasions like *Gṛihya-nishkramaṇa* ( when the child is first taken out from the house ), and *Anna-prāśana* ( when it is first given food ), should have failed to associate the commencement of the primary education with any religious ceremony. The reason, however, is not far to seek. Upanayana Sanskāra, which existed even in the Vedic age, marked the beginning of education in pre-historic times. There was thus no necessity to prescribe a different Sanskāra like *aksharasvīkaraṇa* ( learning of the alphabet ) for the simple reason that the alphabet was then probably unknown.<sup>2</sup> The education of

1. Viśvāmitra, Bṛihaspati, Mārkaṇḍeya, etc. who are quoted by these authorities, cannot be much earlier, as would be clear from the astronomical details mentioned by them. Such details make the appearance only after the 7th or the 8th century. A. D.

2. The view of Dr. Bühler and others that alphabet was un-

children therefore naturally commenced not with the learning of the alphabets, but with the memorising of the sacred hymns, which were the most valued possession of the Aryans and constituted almost their entire literature. Under these circumstances, the Upanayana, which was prescribed at the beginning of the Vedic studies, could be the only ritual to be performed at the commencement of education.

**When and why Evolved :** In the course of time the Vedic Sanskrit ceased to be the spoken language, the sciences of exegesis and grammar were developed, and the art of writing was invented or borrowed. Even the memorising of the Vedic hymns required some previous elementary education. Upanayana could therefore no longer mark the beginning of education and a different ritual called Vidyārambha began to be recommended for the commencement of primary education. This must have taken place at a fairly early date; the fact that the ritual is recommended only by very late authorities is probably to be explained by the circumstance that it was for a long time combined with *chaula* or tonsure ceremony.<sup>1</sup> This

( Continued from the last page )

known in India before c 800 B. C. has to be abandoned in view of the inscribed seals of the Indus Valley civilisation. There is clear cultural evidence to show that the art of writing was known in the later Samhitā period (c. 1600-1200 B. C.); see Ojha; *Prāchīna-lipimālā* pp. 1. ff There is no evidence to show that the art of writing was known in the early Vedic period (2500-2000 B. C.). The Aryans were probably ignorant of that art when they entered India and it may be eventually proved that they learnt it from the "Indus people."

- i. Cf. i वृत्तचौलकर्मा लिपिं संख्यानं चोपयुञ्जीत ।

*Arthasāstra* 1, 2 (On prince's education)

- ii स वृत्तचौलश्चलकाकपक्षकैरमात्यपुत्रैः सवयोभिरन्वितः ।

लिपेर्यथावद्ग्रहणेन वाङ्मयं नदीमुखेनैव समुद्रमाविशत् ॥

*Raghu* III. 7.

- iii [ लवकुशयोः ] निवृत्तचौलकर्मणोश्च तयोस्त्रयीवर्जमितरास्तिस्रो विद्या सावधानेन मनसा परिनिष्ठापिताः ।

*Uttararāmācharit*, Act II.

combination was facilitated by the fact that the time for the ritual, the 4th to the 7th year, was suitable also for the commencement of primary education. The number and nature of the locks of hair to be kept at the time of the tonsure ceremony had close connection with the Vedic sages with whom the family was believed to be connected;<sup>1</sup> this may also have suggested a synchronisation of the commencement of primary education with the celebration of the *chaula-karma*.

### SECTION B.

#### UPANAYANA ( INITIATION<sup>2</sup> ) RITUAL.

**Upanayana, its Meaning and Significance :**  
Upanayana literally means taking a student to a teacher in order to hand him over to the latter for his education. The ritual was originally performed when a student commenced his Vedic education under the supervision of a teacher, with whom he usually lived. It was not an obligatory ritual; the evidence of the Dharmasūtras shows that down to c. 400 B. C. there used to be occasionally some families in society where it was not performed for a generation or two.<sup>3</sup> If a student was unfit by character or calibre<sup>3</sup> to

1. Cf. यथर्षि शिक्षां विदधाति । A. G. S., XVI, 6.

दक्षिणेन कपर्दो वसिष्ठानां उभयतोऽत्रिभार्गवकाश्यपानां  
पंचचूडा आंगिरसाम् । V. G. S. section 4.

2. The popular English translation of the name of the ritual by 'Thread Ceremony' does not convey its real meaning at all. The wearing of the sacred thread was quite a minorelement in the ritual.

3. येषां पिता पितामह इति अनुपततो स्याम् तेषामिच्छतां प्रायश्चित्तम् ।

4. अशूद्राणामदुष्टकर्मणामुपानयनम् । Ap. Cr. S., 1. 1. 5.

विद्या ह वै ब्राह्मणमाजगाम गोपाय मां शेवधिष्टऽहमस्मि ।

असूयकायानृजवेऽप्येताय न मा ब्रूया वीर्यवती तथा स्याम् ॥

Nirukta. II. 4. I.

receive the Vedic education, he was also not admitted to its privilege. If, on the other hand, during the course of his education, he had to go to a different teacher, the ritual had to be repeated. Nay, it was felt that it should be performed again even in the case of married men, if they wanted to prosecute further studies under a new teacher.<sup>1</sup> It was thus essentially an educational ritual and bore some resemblance to the formality of the admission procedure in modern schools and colleges. In the course of time, however, its significance changed. It was felt necessary that the services of the whole Aryan community should be conscripted for the preservation of the Vedic literature which had grown to considerable dimensions in the course of centuries; Upanayana and Vedic studies were therefore made obligatory for all. If it was not performed in time, it was declared that the person would lose his Aryan status and become unfit for marriage and social intercourse. This threat no doubt helped the spread of Vedic learning and gave an impetus to primary education, which was in later times presupposed by Vedic studies; but it also tended to transform this educational function into a bodily (*śāririka*) ritual. It began to be argued that it should be performed even in the case of dumb and deaf persons in order to render them eligible for marriage.<sup>2</sup> Some late Smṛiti writers felt that the

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1. Ch. Up. V. II Here, as a special case, King Aśvapati excuses the formality of Upanayana before beginning to teach his distinguished Brahmana pupils: The latter, however, had come ready for the Upanayana. cf. :—

ते ह समित्पाणयः पूर्वाह्ने प्रतिचक्रमिरे । तान्हानुपनीयैव एतदुवाच ।

2. See *VMS*, p. 38. The difficulty created by the impossibility of the recitation of Vedic hymns by a deaf and dumb person was got over by the theory that they may be recited by the teacher on behalf of the dumb student. बहुपठनीयानां मन्त्राणामाचार्यं प्रत्येव पाठो विधीयते । *Ibid* Some writers like Sankha-Likhita however did not agree with this view; cf. नोन्मत्तमूकान्संस्कुर्यात् । quoted in *VMS*, p. 406.

ritual was primarily for the purification of the body they have therefore recommended that it should be repeated in case the body is defiled by the bite of a dog or a jackal.<sup>1</sup> And if the holy Brahmana can be rendered holier by the Sanskāra, why should it fail to perform a similar miracle in the case of other inanimate objects? In medieval times the custom therefore arose of performing this ceremony over the holy Pipal tree in order to make it holier.<sup>2</sup> All these, however, are later anomalies that crept into society when the original purpose of Upanayana was being gradually forgotten.

**Its Antiquity :** The antiquity of this ritual goes back to pre-historic times. It existed in the Indo-Iranian period and is clearly presupposed by the *Rigveda* [ X. 109, 5; III 8, 4 and 5 ]. The *Atharvaveda* describes it in detail and attributes the proper functioning of society and nature to its mysterious efficacy. If a warrior shines on the battle field, or a king is successful in the administration, or a merchant prospers in his trade, it was all regarded as due to the training of the studentship. Without its help a maiden could not hope to get a suitable partner in life; it was therefore as necessary for girls as for boys. Even the proper functioning of the cosmic powers was attributed to the mysterious efficacy generated by Brahmacharya observed in society.<sup>3</sup>

1. Cf. Sātātapa, Paithīnasi and Yama quoted in *V M S.*, p. 545-7.

2. An inscription from Karnatak refers to a Brahman performing this ceremony on the four Aśvattha trees planted by him in a temple garden in 1858 A.D. *E.C.*, III, Malavalli No. 28.

3. ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा राजा राष्ट्रं विरक्षति । XI. 5. 17.

ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या युवानं विन्दते पतिम् । XI. 5. 18.

ब्रह्मचर्येण तपसा देवा मृत्युमपाप्नोत । XI. 5. 19.

स दाधारपृथ्वीं दिवं च ॥ XI. 5. 1.

See also, VI. 138.

Details about the student's life and paraphernalia, more or less similar to those given in Smṛitis, are to be seen in several passages of the Brāhmaṇa literature.<sup>1</sup> In the early period, the ritual was a simple one; even a verbal acceptance by the teacher was sufficient.<sup>2</sup> For a long time the father himself acted as teacher (*Br. Up.*, V. 2.1; VI. 2. 9).

**Who were eligible for it ?** Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were eligible for the Upanayana and study. They are collectively called Dvijas, because they were all believed to get a second birth, a spiritual one, at the time of the Upanayana. When the ritual became obligatory, it seems to have been regularly performed by all these castes for several centuries. Smṛitis give detailed rules about the different kinds of girdles, staffs, sacred threads, etc., which were prescribed for the members of the various castes. Details about these minor variations would not have been evolved if the ritual had not been a general one among the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. In the course of time, however, Vedic studies fell into background, partly owing to the setback which the Vedic religion received by the rise of the Upanishadic, Jain and Buddhist movements, and partly by the development of other branches of knowledge in the Hindu community itself. Upanayana then began to be gradually discontinued by the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas with whose professions in subsequent life Vedic studies were but remotely connected. This happened at about the beginning of the Christian era, when the theory that only the Brahmanas and Shudras exist in the Kali age seems to

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1. *Tai. S.*, VI. 3, 10 5; *sat. Br.*, XI, 5, 4, (here we have a detailed description of the Upanayana); *Go. Br.*, 1-2, 1-8 (here we have several interesting reasons for the different rules of Brahmacharya).

2. वाचा ह स्मैव पूर्वमुपयति । *Br. Up.*, VI. 2.7.

have gained ascendancy<sup>1</sup>. Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were levelled down to the position of the Shudras, primarily because they were not performing the Upanayana ceremony and wearing the Sacred Thread. Probably in respectable Kshatriya ruling families, the ritual continued to be performed down to the 13th century, but their number was very small. The testimony of Alberuni (I, p. 125) shows that the Vedic education had practically died down among the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas before the 11th century A. D. In the earlier centuries of the Christian era, the ritual was performed by these castes as an unmeaning formality, as is the case with the Brahmanas now. Later on it was discontinued. It may be noted in this connection that it was not without difficulty that Shivaji could succeed in getting a Brahmana Pandit from Banaras, ready to perform the Upanayana for him at the age of 44.

**The Age at the Upanayana :** The Upanayana marks the beginning of the Vedic education, which in several respects resembled the secondary education of modern times. Naturally therefore some age between 8 and 12 was regarded as suitable for it. Usually our texts prescribe that the Upanayana should be performed in the 8th year in the case of a Brahmana,

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1. Bhāsa (3rd century A.D.) and Daṇḍin (7th century A.D.) regarded the sacred thread as an insignia of a Brahmana and not of a Dvija. Cf.

यज्ञोपवीतेन ब्राह्मणश्चीवरेण रक्तपटः *Avimāraṇa*, Act V.

भवदंसोपनीतं यज्ञोपवीतं भूसुरभावं द्योतयति

*Daśakumāracharit*, 2nd Chap.

Cf. also *Raghuvamśa* XI, 64.

An inscription however shows that the Upanayana of the Haysala King Narasimha III, who was a Kshatriya, took place in his 9th year on 25-2-1255. It appears that even when the ritual had gone out of vogue among the Kshatriyas in general, it continued among the royal families.



in the 11th year in the case of a Kshatriya and in the 12th year in the case of a Vaishya. No particular sanctity was attached to these ages;<sup>1</sup> for, some writers like Baudhāyana regard any age between 8 and 16 as suitable for the Upanayana<sup>2</sup>. There was no idea of emphasising the intellectual superiority of the Brahmanas<sup>3</sup>, when a lower age was prescribed for their Upanayana. Family traditions in Brahmanical circles facilitated Vedic education at an early age: such was not the case with Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, Brahmana boys could very often begin their Vedic education at home; Kshatriya and Vaishya boys had necessarily to leave their families and go to a Brahmana teacher for that purpose; the age of 11-12, when boys are to some extent able to look after themselves, was the therefore found convenient for them. It is interesting to note that the Brahmana boy Śvetaketu also performed his Upanayana at the age of 12 and immediately went to stay with his preceptor for prosecuting his education ( *Ch. Up.* VI. 1-2). It would therefore appear that even in Brahmanical families, the Upanayana was postponed to a later age when it was to be followed by the separation of the boy from his family. It is the similar necessity of sending the boys outside to a town or a city that compels villagers of our time to begin their wards' secondary education at about the age of 11 or 12. In cultured Brahmana families, which were very keen about the quick progress of their sons, the

1. The selection of these particular ages seems to have been due to the rather fortuitous circumstance of the syllables of each line of the Sāvitrī Mantras of these castes being 8, 11 and 12 respectively; Cf. ब्राह्मणादिवर्णसंबन्धिनां छंदसां पादाक्षरसंख्याब्दैरुपनयनस्य विधेः ( कार्य-त्वात् ) । Medhātithi on *Manu*, II. 88. Cf. also *VMS*, p. 841.

2. अष्टमे प्रायुष्कामं नवमे तेजस्कामं...त्रयोदशे मेधाकामं चतुर्दशे पुष्टिकामं...षोडशे सर्वकामम् । *Bau. Gr. Sr.*, II. 5. 5.

3. As supposed by Keay ( p. 29 ) and Das ( p. 72 ).

tradition was to perform the Upanayana and begin the Vedic studies even earlier than the 8th year.<sup>1</sup> This practice is similar to that of many well-to-do and cultured city families, which begin the secondary or English education of their wards at about the age of 6 or 7. Smritis have therefore naturally given much latitude about the age at the Upanayana in order to suit the circumstances and convenience of the different types of families in society<sup>2</sup>. They however felt that it ought to begin at about the age of 12, for the powers of mind that were required for the Vedic studies could be properly cultivated and developed only at an early age. The commencement of the Vedic studies after the age of 16 has been definitely discouraged by them.<sup>3</sup> for it was rightly apprehended that a boy who begins his studies at such an advanced age may

1. सप्तमे ब्राह्मणमुपनयीत पंचमे ब्रह्मवर्चसकामम् । *J. Gr. S.*, I. 12  
Cf. also *G. D. S.*, I. 1. 7; *M. Gr. S.*, I. 22. 1; *Vā. Gr. S.*, 6.

2. A child of 6 or 7 could not recite with proper accent and pronunciation even the *Sāvitri* verse; so it was recommended that in the cases of very early Upanayanas, the teaching of this Mantra should be postponed by about a year; Cf. तां ह स्मैतां पुरा संवत्सरे अन्वाहः संवत्सरसंमिता वै गर्भाः । *S. Br. XI*. It may be noted in this connection that at a time when there was a prejudice against committing the Vedic texts to writing and when grammar had not been evolved, not much preparation by way of primary education was necessary for commencing Vedic studies. They could therefore be begun even at the early age of 6 or 7.

It is interesting to note that Smritis do not lay down any detailed rules about the astrological auspiciousness of the day of the Upanayana. These were introduced in medieval times.

3. नातिषोडशवर्षमुपनयीत प्रसृष्टवृषणो ह्येष वृषलीभूतो भवति ।  
*J. Gr. S.*, I. 12.

The upper limit of 22 and 24 permitted for the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas is due simply to the doubling of their normal age. The readiness of Mitramisra, a 17th century writer, to permit Upanyana upto the age of 24, 33 and 36 seems to be due to the exigencies of the age, when some persons like Sivaji were performing the ritual, when reminded about it, or when it became absolutely necessary.  
VMS. 351.

find them too tedious, his mind having already become susceptible to sensuous attractions.

**Critical Survey of the Ritual :** An educationalist will find the survey of the Upanayana ritual very interesting and instructive. The ritual opens with a breakfast (which precedes even the bath), during which it is the custom in many parts of the country for the boy to share food with his mother in the same dish. A breakfast before bath is unusual in Hindu rituals and its occurrence at the Upanayana was obviously intended to indicate that the earlier period of unregulated childhood had come to an end and that serious and disciplined life was now to follow. Breakfast was followed by a shave,—an invariable element in most of the Hindu religious observances. The boy was then given bath and offered a *Kaupīna*.<sup>1</sup> This was to remind him that the Upanayana commenced a new epoch in his life from which dignity, decorum and self-restraint could never be separated. A girdle (*mekhalā*) was tied round his waist as a support for *Kaupīna*. It was made of triple cord, the symbolism being intended to foster the belief in the scholar that he was being continuously encircled by the three Vedas". The verses recited on the occasion of tying the girdle informed the boy that his belt was a daughter of Faith (*Śraddhā*) and a sister of the sages, possessed the power of protecting his purity and chastity and would keep him away from evil<sup>2</sup>. Hindu ideas of decorum

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1. *Kaupīna* denotes the small strip of cloth used by children to cover their private parts. It was usually discontinued at about the age of 12 when the boy was required to wear the full *dhotī*. Cf. Aśvalayana quoted in VMS. p. 432.

2. वेदत्रयेणावृत्तोहमिति मन्येत स द्विजः । आश्वलायन

in VMS. p. 432.

3. श्रद्धाया दुहिता तपसोधिजाता स्वसा ऋषीणां भूतकृतां बभूव ।

A. U., VI. 133. 4.

4. ऋतस्य गोप्त्री तपसश्चरित्रा धन्ती रक्षांसि सहमानाऽरातीः ।

Vā. Gr S. 5.

required that when engaged in religious duties, the upper part of the body should be covered with a piece of cloth.<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the Upanayana the young scholar was therefore offered an upper garment. In the earliest period, when spinning and weaving were probably unknown, a deer-skin was offered on the occasion. The youth was asked to remember that the lovely deer-skin is symbolical of *brahmavarchasam* or spiritual and intellectual pre-eminence and that its constant use ought to urge him to attain reputation as a man of character and scholarship.<sup>2</sup> When spinning and weaving became common, a piece of cloth was offered to the boy on this occasion, spun and woven in his own family just before the ceremony.<sup>3</sup> A survey of the Gṛihya-sūtras, which describe the Upanayana ritual in detail, shows that the investiture with the Sacred Thread did not form part of the Upanayana ritual. The upper garment that was offered to the boy was in lieu of the Sacred Thread or rather its predecessor. This will be shown in the Appendix D. where the whole history of the Sacred Thread and its significance will be discussed in details.

**Presentation to Deities :** Invested with the above paraphernalia, the boy was taken to the sacred fire, the earliest Indo-European deity known so far. He was asked to offer a *samidh* ( a piece of sacred fuel ) to the gleaming fire and the verses recited on the occasion prayed that God Fire should be auspicious to the young scholar and endow him with brilliance, intelligence

1. स्नानं दानं तपो होमः स्वाध्यायः पितृतर्पणम् ।

नैकवस्त्रो द्विजः कुर्याच्छ्राद्धभोजनसत्क्रियाः ॥

Yogayājñyavalkya in SCS., p. 299

2. G. Br. 1. 2. 1-3.

3. वासः सद्यः कृत्वोत्तं । B. Gr. 5., 11. 5. 11.

and vigour,<sup>1</sup> so that his scholarship and strength should glow up like the resplendent flame of fire. In order to intensify his piety, the boy was then presented to a number of Vedic deities like Bhaga, Yama, Aryamā and Sāvitrī. The last mentioned god was charged with the special duty of protecting the student from harm, disease and death.<sup>2</sup> When this presentation was over, the teacher assured his pupil that he was thenceforward under divine protection;<sup>3</sup> fortified by that consciousness, he should push forth his studies without any apprehensions.

**Standing on Stone :** The next element in the ritual is a symbolical one; the boy was asked to stand on a stone and enjoined to be steadfast in the pursuit of his studies.<sup>4</sup> Firm determination and singleness of purpose are most essential for a successful educational career and the necessity of cultivating them was emphasised on the scholar's mind by this element in the ritual.

**Acceptance by the Teacher :** The scholar was then brought before his teacher who asked him whose Brahmachārin<sup>5</sup> ( student ) he was. The young boy naturally replied to the preceptor that he was the latter's disciple.

1. Cf अयं त इध्म आत्मा जातवेदः

तेन ध्यस्व वर्द्धस्व चेद्धि वर्द्धय चास्मान् । *Bh. Gr. S.*, 1. 5,

2. Cf. देव सवितरेष ते ब्रह्मचारी स मा मृत । *As. Gr. S. I*, 20, 6.

3. *Śat. Br. XI*. 5. 4. 3.

4. *Ma. Gr. S. I*. 22. 12. Stone was also symbolical of strength ; *Bh. G. S.*, held that the significance of the ritual was to make the boy invulnerable. I. 8.

5. *Brahma* originally meant prayer ; the original meaning of *Brahmacharya* was thus the period of study of the sacred prayers or the Vedic Mantras. Since chastity was usually observed in this period, the term came to acquire the secondary sense of a period of chastity as well. *Brahmachārin* was one who followed *Brahmacharya* discipline.

The preceptor then used to correct him and asked him to not that he was the pupil of gods Indra and Agni, the most popular and powerful among the Vedic deities.<sup>1</sup> When formally taking charge of the pupil by seizing his right hand, the teacher used to announce that he was doing so with the command and concurrence of God Savitri.<sup>2</sup> The teacher then touched the heart of his pupil and prayed that there should be a perpetual and perfect accord between them.<sup>3</sup> All this was intended to emphasise that the relations between the teacher and the pupil were sacred and not mercenary and progress in education was possible only if there was complete harmony, sympathy and wholehearted communion between the teacher and the taught.

**Teaching and Significance of the Savitri ( Gayatri ) Mantra :** Then followed the actual initiation of the student in the Vedic studies, which was done by teaching him a prayer to the sun ( *Savitri-mantra* ) this is popularly known as *Gāyatri-mantra* on account of its metre. This prayer, which every student and householder had to recite morning and evening, runs as follows:—

*Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi Dhiyo  
ye nab prachodayāt.*<sup>4</sup>

1. Cf. कस्य त्वं ब्रह्मचार्यसि । भवत इत्युच्यमाने इन्द्रस्य ब्रह्मचार्यसि  
अग्निराचार्यस्तव अहमाचार्यस्तव । *Pā. Gr. S.*, II. 3.

2. *As Gr. S.*, I.20.4.

3. *H. Cr. S.*, I, 5, 11.

4. Early authorities like *Pā. Gr. S.*, II. 3. 10 prescribe the same prayer to the sun for the students of all the castes. Later writers begin to prescribe a different Mantra for the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas, probably influenced by the theory that Trishtubh metre is appropriate for the Kshatriya and Jagati for the vaishtribh metre is appropriate for the Kshatriya and the Jagati for the Vaishya. The tradition however is not unanimous about these Mantras and may be taken to be unreliable as far as the early period is concerned.

The prayer made to the sun in this Mantra is quite appropriate for the student to whom it was first taught. For a successful and brilliant career, what is most essential for the student is the possession of an efficient intellect. Health, wealth, good memory are all desirable, but more important than them all is a creative and stimulating intellect; it is the power conferred by the latter that has enabled man to establish his supremacy over the Nature.<sup>1</sup> It is

( Continued from the last page )

The following Mantras are prescribed by different authorities for the Kshatriyas:—

आ कृष्णेन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्मृतं मर्त्यं च ।

हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेना देवो याति भुवनानि पश्यन् ॥

<sup>1</sup>According to Medhātithi on *Manu*, II, 38'

हिरण्यपाणिः सविता विचर्षणिरुभे द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरीयते ।

अथामीवां बाधते वेति सूर्यमभिकृष्णेन रजसा द्यामृणोति ॥

<sup>2</sup>According to Nārāyaṇa on S. Gr. S., 11. 5'

The Mantras for the Vaishyas are said to be the following :—

विश्वा रूपाणि प्रतिमुञ्चते कविः प्रासावीद्भद्रं द्विपदे चतुष्पदे ।

वि नाकमख्यत्सविता वरेण्योऽनु प्रयाणमुषसो विराजति ॥

<sup>3</sup>According to Medhātithi on *Mann*. 11. 38. Śātātapa and Laugākshī quoted in *DMS*, p. 430 and *Aparārka* on *Yāj* I. 15 ).

युञ्जते मन उत युञ्जते धियः विप्रा विप्रस्य बृहतो विपश्चितः ।

वि होत्रा दधे वयुनाविदेक इन्मही देवस्य सवितुः परिष्टुतिः ॥

<sup>4</sup>According to *Āś*. Gr. S., III. 7 and *Vā*. Gr. S., 6'

हंसः शुचिषद्वसुरन्तरिक्षसद्भोता वेदिषदतिथिदुरोणसत् ।

नृषद्वरसदृतसद्वयोसमदब्जा गोजा ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतम् ॥

<sup>5</sup>According to Nārāyaṇa on *Manu*. II. 38'

1. We have seen above how the Gāyatrī Matra is naturally very appropriate for the student and the householder. It was later regarded as the very essence of the Vedas, and so quite mysterious meaning began to be read in it. Compare for instance the view of Brihat-Parāśara, (V 77-77 :—

तत्प्रकृतिः स स्वातं विकारो बुद्धिरेव च । तुरित्येतदहंकारं वशदं

P. T. O.

therefore quite appropriate that the prayer offered by every Aryan, morning and evening, should urge the sun to endow him with a brilliant intellect, and also to give a proper stimulus to it. Mere intellect is not sufficient if it has no capacity to receive proper stimulation. The prayer is offered to the sun because he was regarded as the one and universal source of stimulation for both the animate and the inanimate world.

**Investiture with Staff; Its Significance:** With the learning of the Gāyatrī Mantra, the student begins his journey on the road to knowledge; he was therefore invested with a staff, which was a traveller's symbol in olden days. While accepting it, the student prayed that with divine grace he may reach the goal

( Continued from the last page )

विद्धि पापहम् ॥ रे स्पर्श तु णि रूपं च यं रसं गन्धमत्र भम् । गोँ श्रोत्रं  
दे त्वचं वै व चक्षुः स्य रसता तथा ॥ धी नासा च म वाचा च हि  
हस्तौ धि च पाद्द्वयम् । यो उपस्थ मुखं योऽन्यो नः खं प्रकारमारुतम् ॥  
चो तेजो द जलं यात्क्षमा गायत्र्यास्तत्त्वचितनम् । So also about the  
significance of the Vyāhṛiti letters, *Kuṣmapurāṇa*, *uttarārdha*, 14, 53  
and *Ādi-Purāṇa* *Ādi*. 53-54-5 maintain that they denote Pradhāna,  
Puruṣa and Kāla; or Vishnu, Brahmā and Mahesha. or Satva,  
Rajas and Tamas respectively. Cf. प्रधानं पुरुष कालो विष्णुर्ब्रह्माहेश्वरः ।  
सत्त्वं रजस्तमस्तिन्नः क्रमाद् व्याहृतयः स्मृताः ।

*Agnipurāṇa* ch. 216 has similar mythical glorification of the Gāyatrī Mantra.

In this connection we may draw the reader's attention to a remark of Kauṭilya in the *Mudrārākṣhaśa* that he is quite indifferent to the defections in his camp as long as his intellect continues to be as efficient as before. cf. एका केवलमर्थसाधनविधौ सेनाशतेभ्योऽधिका । नन्दोन्मूलनदृष्टवीर्यविभवा बुद्धिस्तु मा गान्धम ॥ Act II



of his arduous journey<sup>1</sup>. The staff exhorted the student to become a careful watchman, charged with the duty of guarding the Vedas.<sup>2</sup> It served the purpose of making the student self-confident and self-reliant, when he was out in the forest to collect the sacred fuel, or travelling in darkness or entering an unknown river or tank.<sup>3</sup> It was also useful in controlling the cattle of the teacher, if it was necessary for the student to look after them.

**Ceremonial Begging :** The student was expected to maintain himself by begging cooked food every day; so the practice commenced on the day of the Upanayana. The begging on the first day however was a ceremonial affair, for the boy was to approach only such persons as would not refuse his request. He would therefore first go to his mother and then her sister and then other relatives. In the modern Upanayana ritual this ceremonial begging has assumed the proportions of an imposing and stately procession, winding its way through the main thoroughfares of the town or village.

**Medhajanana Ritual :** For three days after the Upanayana, the student was said to remain in an embryonic condition; it was on the fourth day that his spiritual birth took place. The preceptor, who was now in the position of the father, then performed the Medhajanana ritual for sharpening the memory, intellect and grasping power of the student. Prayer was offered that the student should be favoured with an intelligence as attractive as cows, as vigorous as studs and as brilliant as the solar rays; it should be equally effective in mechanical, material and spiritual

1. *Ma. Gr. S.*, I. 22. 11.

2. *Vā. Gr. S.*, 6.

3. *Aparārka* on I. 29.

spheres.<sup>1</sup> Medhāianana ritual marked the termination of the Upanayana ceremony.

**Significance of the ritual :** At the time when the significance of the Upanayana ritual and Mantras was perfectly grasped, a very powerful impression must have been produced on the mind of all the parties participating in the ceremony through the various suggestions conveyed to them by the different elements in the ritual. The ritual heralded the beginning of a new epoch in the student's life, characterised by dignity, decorum and discipline. The scholar was to regard himself as a self-reliant traveller bound for the realm of knowledge; the journey was to be long and arduous, but if there was the singleness of purpose, devotion to studies and perfect accord between him and his teacher, he would surely reach his goal. For, divine help and co-operation were enlisted on his behalf; even death could not touch him if he properly followed the rules of his order ( *Ś. Br.*, XI. 2. 6; *B. D. S.*, I. 3 ). His personality will develop like that of Indra and personality will glow up like the refulgent flame of God Fire. He will find nothing relating to his literary goal impossible if he worked with faith, assiduousness and determination. What better ideas can be conveyed to a young scholar at the beginning of his education ?

1 त्वं नो मेघे प्रथमा गोभिरश्वैभिरागहि ।

त्वं सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिस्त्वं नो असि यज्ञिया ॥

यां मेघामृभवो वदुर्यां मेघामसुरा विदुः ।

ऋषयो भद्रां मेघां यां विदुस्तां मध्या वेश्यामसि ॥

*A. U.*, VI 108, 1,3.

Ribhus were famous for their mechanical skill and Asuras for their material civilization.

## SECTION C

## RITUALS DURING THE COLLEGE SESSION.

**Introduction :** Rituals were naturally prescribed at the beginning and at the end of the annual school session, as they were at the beginning and at the end of the educational course. In pre-historic times the annual session of schools and colleges began soon after the commencement of the rainy season, when the sowing operations were over and crops had begun to sprout. This usually happened by the full moon day of Śrāvaṇa<sup>1</sup> (August); so the ritual of *Chhandasām-upākarma*, i. e. of 'gathering the Vedic knowledge', was performed on that day. Later on it began to be described as Śrāvaṇi<sup>2</sup>. In pre-historic times Vedic literature was not extensive; so a college term of about five or six months was found to be sufficient for mastering it. The ritual of *Chhandasām-utsarjana*, i. e. the cessation of Vedic studies, was therefore performed on the full moon day of Pausa or Māgha (February-March). In later times when the Vedic literature became very extensive, and more branches of learning were developed like grammar, philology, logic, philosophy and Dharmaśāstra the duration of the annual term was extended over practically the whole

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1. The full moon days of Āshādhā, Śrāvaṇa and Bhādrapada are mentioned by different authorities as appropriate days for Upākarma. ( Cf *Bou. Gr. S. III. 1-2-3, Kh. Gr. S., III. 2, 14; Hi. Gr. S., II, 18, 1* ). Rainy season is receding back every century and it commences in different months in different provinces of India. Hence this divergence about the appropriate season for Upākarma. One early authority goes to the extent of stating that any time in Dakṣhiṇāyana would be suitable for the Upākarma ritual *G. O. S. 11, 7-2.*

2. Śrāvaṇi is a relatively modern name for the ritual. In early times it denoted the Nāga worship ritual performed on the full moon day of Śrāvaṇa; when this ritual went out of vogue, the name was transferred to the *Chhandasām-Upākarma* ritual, because that too was usually performed on the same day.

year. Curiously enough, owing to the force of the established tradition, the Utsarjana ceremony still continued to be performed in February or March, though the college studies did not cease at that time. At present the ritual is not performed at its proper time but is combined with the Upākarma ritual. This practice goes back to medieval times.

**Upākarma Śrāvaṇī ; its Significance :** The statement that Śrāvaṇī denotes a ritual performed at the beginning of the college session may appear fanciful to the modern Hindu, who is accustomed to associate it with the annual replacement of the sacred thread, but there is ample and clear evidence to justify it. Our authorities declare that the ritual was to be performed only by the teacher along with his students when they had reassembled at the beginning of the session.<sup>1</sup> It was believed that the presiding teacher would get in the course of time as many students as was the number of sesamums offered as oblations in this ritual<sup>2</sup>; some texts lay down special formulas to be performed by teachers ambitious to have a large number of scholars.<sup>3</sup> In some places there was the custom requiring the teacher to give a feast to his students on the day of Śrāvaṇī.<sup>4</sup> It would thus be clear that the ritual of Śrāvaṇī was originally confined only to teachers and students and was performed on the opening day of the annual session.

1. अध्येष्यमाणः अध्याप्यैरन्वारब्धः.....। *As. Gr. S.*, 3. 4. 10.

समारब्धेष्वन्तेवासिषु.....'उपाकर्म' कुर्वीत । सहान्तेवासिभिः  
ग्रामादभिनिष्क्रम्य.....उत्सर्जनविधिः । *Ban. Gr. S.*, III. 3. ff.

2. स यावन्तं गणमिच्छेत्तावन्तस्तिलानाकर्षफलेन जुहुयात् । *P. Gr.*

3. अन्तेवासिनां योगमिच्छन्नथ जपति... । *Vā. Gr. S.*, 7.

4. सङ्गहाचारिणश्च उपसमेतान्भोजयेदाचार्यः । *J. Gr. S.*, I. 14.

**Prevention of Wastage in Education :** Later on, however, it came to be prescribed for the whole community primarily to prevent wastage in education. We are all aware how a large number of students lose their study habits and forget a good deal of what they had learnt in their schools and colleges, when they settle down as householders, pursuing their own professions. The same thing happened in the past. It was however regarded as a serious disaster in ancient times, as the modern facilities of books and libraries were the non-existent. In the course of time therefore educationalists began to feel that steps must be taken to ensure that even householders would set apart some time in the year for revising their studies. Some of them, like Śvetaketu, advocated that they should be asked to spend two-months every year in their old colleges for this purpose. The majority however felt that it is impracticable to suggest to householders that they should give up their professions for two month every year in order to keep themselves in touch with their studies.<sup>1</sup> They therefore proposed that the monsoon time should be devoted to the task of revising their studies. They could easily do this at home, if they only would set apart a little time for the work every day. It was therefore decided to lay it down that householders also should join the students in the Śrāvaṇī ritual and take a vow to revise their studies. Students performing the Śrāvaṇī were to prosecute their studies at their schools and colleges; householders taking part in it were to revise them at home, devoting special time for the purpose

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1. निवेशे वृत्ते संवत्सरे द्वौ द्वौ मासौ समाहितः आचार्यकुले वसेद्भूयः  
श्रुतमिच्छन्निति श्वेतकेतुः । एतेन ह्यहं योगेन भूयः पूर्वस्माच्छ्रुतमकरव-  
मिति । तच्छास्त्रविप्रतिषिद्धम् । निवेशे हि वृत्ते नैयामिकानि श्रूयन्ते ।

and observing the rules of the student-life as far as practicable.<sup>1</sup>

**Sravanī Ritual ; Its critical Survey :** When it is remembered that Śrāvāṇī was a ritual performed by teachers and students at the beginning of the college session, and by others at the onset of the monsoon when the annual period of revision of studies commenced, we can well anticipate its nature and details. The ritual differed with different Vedic schools,<sup>2</sup> but there is one central idea common to them all, viz., on the opening day, Vedic and sacrificial deities should be offered oblations, presiding deities over intellect, memory and imagination should be propitiated, and a tribute of gratefulness should be paid to the intellectual giants of the past, who have enriched the national literature. It was a very happy idea indeed to remind the students of the deep debt of gratitude they all owed to the literary celebrities of the past on the very opening day of the session. When they paid tribute to them, their ambition was naturally fired into following their glorious example. They thus commenced their annual studies with zest, vigour and ambition, hoping one day to equal the ancients in their achievements. When the ritual

1. न मांसमश्नीयान्न श्राद्धकम् । न लोमानि संहारयेत् ।

न स्त्रियमुपेयादृतौ जायामुपेयात् । J.Gr.S, Upākarma section.

2. Thus the followers of the R̥gveda used to recite the opening and concluding verses of each of the ten books of their Veda. The followers of the Yajurveda used to offer oblations to all the Vedas, Itihāsa and Purāṇa and pay tribute to the celebrated scholars of their own school like Kṛishṇa Dvaipāyana, Vaiśampāyana and Tittiri (the authors of the Veda), Ātreya, the author of the *Pada-pāṭha*, Kaṇḍīnīya, the *oritikāra*, Baudhāyana, the *pravachanākāra*, Āpastamba the *Sūtrakāra* and to other celebrities like Satyāśhādha. Hiraṇyakeśin, Vājasaneyā, Yājñavalkya, Bhāradvāja and Agni-veśya (Bau. Gr. S., III. 1). The followers of The Sāmaveda invoked the memory of their own celebrated like jaimini, Tālavakāra Bānāyani, Bāguri, etc.

was extended to householders in later times, it reminded them of their duty to be up-to-date in their own branches of learning. It is a pity indeed that the modern educational system has not got a ceremony of similar significance.

**Śrāvani and the Sacred Thread :** The critical reader may now naturally enquire as to the causes that have led to the close association of Śrāvani with the change of the sacred thread. The renewal of the sacred thread was a minor element in the ritual; most of our authorities do not even refer to it. At the time of most of the Vratas (vows) and Sanskāras, a new sacred thread, staff, girdle, etc. were to be worn by students.<sup>1</sup> Śrāvani was no exception ; on this occasion also they discarded their old sacred threads, staffs, girdles etc., and substituted them by new ones,—a procedure somewhat similar to that of the modern student, who usually gets new clothes prepared when he leaves home for joining his college. By a strange irony of fate, the most insignificant element in this ritual has now assumed an altogether disproportionate importance and its real nature and significance have been forgotten altogether.

**Utsarjana Ritual :** This was performed at the end of the college term sometime in February or March. The procedure was more or less the same as that on the opening day. Respectful homage was once more paid to the Vedic deities mental and intellectual faculties and the literary giants of the past before the students dispersed home from their schools or colleges.

1. वपनं मेखला दंडो भैक्षचर्या व्रतानि च ।

एतानि तु निवर्तते पुनः संस्कारकर्मणि ॥

## SECTION D.

## SAMĀVARTANA OR CONVOCATION RITUAL.

**Who were eligible?** Samāvartna<sup>1</sup> or Snāna<sup>2</sup> ceremony was performed at the end of the *Brahmacharya* period to mark the termination of the education course<sup>3</sup>. When however in the course of time, the original nature and purport of the ritual were forgotten and the Upanayana began to be regarded as an obligatory and bodily Sanskāra, this ritual also came to be performed in all cases, irrespective of the consideration as to whether any educational course was followed by the youth or not. In early times it was performed when the education of the youth was over; marriage usually followed, but by no means immediately. In later times the ritual came to be performed as a kind of necessary formality just before the marriage, when it was settled<sup>4</sup>. (VMS, p. 575). This of course was not the original idea. The ritual was intended to correspond in a very great degree to the modern convocation function. Only those who have passed their examination are at present admitted to the convocation; only those who had finished their education were in the beginning honoured with the privilege of Samāvartana. Our authorities prescribe no definite age for this ritual. The duration of the student-life varied with different

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1. *Samāvartana* literally means 'returning'; it refers to the return of the student to his home after finishing the course at the teacher's home.

2. This term refers to the bath given to the student on the occasion.

3. Some held that it should not be performed in the case of those who were not able to interpret the Vedic texts committed to memory by them; Cf. *अन्यो वेदपाठी । न तस्य स्नानम् ।*

*M. Gr. S.* 1, 2, 3.

4. In northern India, the custom was introduced to perform it immediately after Upanayana.



courses and students, as has been already shown in Chapter IV; and so no fixed age could be prescribed for this ritual.

**An interesting Preliminary:** Samāvartana ceremony is as simple as it is significant. An auspicious day was selected and the student was required to shut himself up in a room throughout the morning. This appears to be a queer procedure, but it was due to the desire to save the sun the humiliation of being confronted with a superior lustre. The belief was that the sun can shine only with the lustre he borrows from the Snātakas ( graduates ), who have completed their education.<sup>1</sup> What better compliment can be conceived for education ?

**The Procedure :** The student came out of his room at the midday, cleansed his mouth and shaved his head and beard. He then relinquished his girdle ( *mekhalā* ), deer-skin ( *ajina* ) etc., which were the insignia of the student's order. The period of strict discipline was now over and the teacher himself who had sternly refused him the use of a number of luxuries, now came forward to offer them to him. He himself gave him a bath in fragrant water. It was followed by an offer of new clothes. Ornaments, garland<sup>2</sup>, callyrium, turban, umbrella and shoes, the use of which was a taboo to him in the Brahmacharya period, were now to be formally and officially offered to him by his teacher with the recitation of proper Mantras. It was expected that the guardians, who were well off, would furnish a double set of the above articles, one for the teacher and the other for the ward.<sup>3</sup> A Homa followed and the hope was

1. Cf. एतदहःस्नातानां ह वा एष एतच्चेजसा तपति तस्मादेनमेतद-  
हर्नाभितपेत् । Bh. G.S, II. 1, 8

2. The garland given to the Snātaka was technically known as *srag* and word *sragvi* technically denoted a Snātaka.

3. As. Gr. S. III, 8.

expressed that the young graduate would get plenty of students to teach.<sup>1</sup> The teacher then offered him *Madhuparka*,<sup>2</sup> an honour reserved for the very select few like the king, Guru, and son-in-law.

**Presentation to the Assembly :** Dressed in his new dress, the student would proceed to the assembly of the learned men of the locality in a chariot or on an elephant.<sup>3</sup> He was there formally introduced as a competent scholar by his teacher. Returning home he would bid farewell to his teacher after paying him such honorarium (*gurudakṣhiṇā*) as he could afford. A critical survey of the Samavartana ritual will show how high was the respect in which scholars who had completed their education were held by society. One authority asserts that they were the greatest force in human life.<sup>4</sup>

#### SECTION E.

#### AYURVEDIC UPANAYANA.

**Rituals in useful education :** When we consider the great hold which religion possesses over the Hindu mind, it is natural to expect some rituals in useful and professional education also. We proceed to describe some of them in sections E to G.

**All Castes eligible :** Upanayana or Initiation was primarily intended for Vedic education, but very soon its principle was extended to useful education also. Early writers on Āyurveda, like Charaka and Suśruta, lay down a special Upanayana ceremony for students seeking admission to the medical course.

1. *Bau. Gr. S.*, II.6.

2. *Madhuparka* denotes an offering of ghee, honey, etc. presented by the householder to a respectable guest on his arrival home.

3. *Dr. Gr. S.*, III, 1, 28, *Ap. Gr. S.*, I, 11, 5.

4. Cf. महद् एतद् भूतं या स्नातकः ।

The medical profession was not like the Vedic scholarship an exclusive monopoly, in theory or practice, of any particular caste; so Suśruta holds that a Kshatriya or a Vaishya physician also can play the role of the teacher for boys of his own caste.<sup>1</sup> It is quite probable that even Brahmana boys may have been initiated by non-Brahmana medical teachers, though our texts do not attest to this practice. The surgical school of Suśruta was in favour of the admission of even Shudra boys, though formal Upanayana with the recitation of the Mantras was prohibited in their case.<sup>2</sup> It is quite probable that Kshatriya and Shudra surgeons may have been, by tradition and environment, better adepts in the use of the knife than their Brahmana and Vaishya compeers.<sup>3</sup>

**Survey of the Ritual :** Ayurvedic Upanayana was a short ritual modelled largely upon the Vedic prototype. An auspicious day was selected for the purpose. *Darbha*, *Samidhs* (sacred fuel), flowers, etc. were collected, an altar was specially prepared, and oblations of ghee and honey were offered to various deities and sages, first by the teacher and then by the student. Naturally Dhanvantari, Aśvins, Indra, Prajāpati and the Sūtrakṛas intimately connected with the development of the medical science occupied the place of honour in this sacrifice. Both the teacher and the student circumambulated the fire on the altar. Brahmanas and celebrated physicians were then worshipped by the pupil. Then in the presence of the sacred fire the Guru charged the student to follow the

1. Sūtra-sthāna, II, 5

2. *Ibid.*

3. Such minor surgical operations as were performed before the introduction of the modern surgery were usually attempted by barbers both in India and Europe.

well known rules of the student life and refrain from lust, anger, covetousness, laziness, pride, untruth and cruelty.<sup>1</sup> The student was specially required to be always industrious and engaged in the pursuit of fresh knowledge. He ought to have faith in his teacher, who was required to teach him all that he knew.

#### SECTION F.

#### DHANURVEDIC OR MILITARY UPANAYANA.<sup>2</sup>

**Ritual described :** The ritual was to be performed on an auspicious day at the beginning of the military education. The student, who was required to observe a fast on that day, used to offer oblations to gods at the outset. Brahmanas were then fed and presents were offered to the teacher. The most important part of the ritual was the offering of a weapon to the youth along with the recitation of a Vedic Mantra. Military training was no monopoly of the Kshatriyas in early times, and Vasishṭha therefore lays down that a Brahmana was to be invested with a bow, the Kshatriya with a sword, the Vaishya with a lance and the Shudra with a mace. The Guru, who could initiate the youths, was himself expected to be an expert in the use of these and other weapons.

**Not common in early Times :** How far this Dhanurvedic Upanayana was common among the Kshatriyas or those classes of the community, who received the military training, we do not know. The ritual is not mentioned by any early authority, and the epic heroes are not stated to have performed it. The Mantra recited at the time of offering the weapon to the student has no connection with the occasion,

1. Suśruta, Sūtra-sthāna, chap. 2.

2. Described only in *Dhanurveda-Saṃhitā* of Vasishṭha, which is a very late work.

as shown in the foot-note below.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore very doubtful whether the ritual was in general vogue. Probably it was a later invention and confined to a small section of the Kshatriya community.

#### SECTION G.

### CHHURIKĀ-BANDHA OR MILITARY CONVOCATION.

**Chhurika-bandha :** This ceremony corresponds to Brahmanical Samāvartana and was performed at the end of the military training. The central and essential part of the ritual was, as the name itself would suggest, the investiture of the budding hero with a dagger in token of his having completed his military training.<sup>2</sup> This ceremony is mentioned by Nārada alone, but it was fairly common in Rajputana among Rajput families at the beginning of the 19th century, and was known as *kharg bandhāi* ( tying of the sword ), which is the vernacular rendering of the *chhurikā-bandha* of Nārada. This ceremony, which was performed before the marriage, may have been common in higher aristocratic families.

1. The Mantra laid down by Vasishṭha is as follows :—

काण्डात्काण्डं प्ररोहन्ती परुषस्पर्शस्परि ।

एवा नो दूर्वे प्रतनु सहस्रेण शतेन च ॥

या शतेन प्ररोहसि सहस्रेण विरोहसि ।

तस्मै ते देशीष्टके विधेम हविषा वयम् ॥ V. S. XIII. 20. 1.

The stanzas, however, refer to Dūrvā grass and have no connection with the bow or arrow.

2. Cf. छुरिकाबन्धनं वक्ष्ये नृपाणां प्राक्करग्रहात् ।

विवाहोक्तेषु मासेषु शुक्लपक्षेऽप्यनस्तरे ॥

छुरिकाबन्धनं कार्यं अर्चयित्वामरान्पितृन् ।

अर्चयेच्छुरिकां नित्यं देवतानां च संनिधौ ॥

व्रतलग्ने च बध्नीयात्कट्यां लक्षणसंयुताम् ।

नारद in V. M. S. p. 580.

## APPENDIX II.

### YAJÑOPAVĪTA OR THE SO-CALLED SACRED THREAD;

**Introduction :** Yajñopavīta is at present understood to be the Sacred Thread, that is to be worn by the twice-born classes from the time of the Upanayana ceremony onwards. The popular belief is that the Upanayana ceremony is primarily intended for investing the boy with this mysterious thread, and the Śrāvaṇī ritual for the purpose of renewing it annually. We have already shown how both these conceptions are wrong (p. 299, p. 310). Here we propose to trace briefly the history of Yajñopavīta.

**Yajñopavīta, the upper Garment.** Later writers explain Yajñopavīta thread as a symbol of the *Guṇamayī Māyā*, as it was visualised by the Creator at the time of creation;<sup>1</sup> but its original significance was entirely different. Grammatically, Yajñopavīta is an adjective and refers to something that was worn at the time of the sacrifice; यज्ञाय उपवीतं । यज्ञोपवीतम् । Hindu notion of decency required that the upper part of the body should be properly covered when one was engaged in sacred functions like sacrifices, charity

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1. सिसृक्षुरेक एवाग्रे समासीनः शिवः स्वयम् ।  
दृष्ट्वा गुणमयीं मायां सूत्ररूपमिवाकरोत् ॥  
तथा तदात्मकं विष्णुं स्पृष्ट्वा पालं दिवौकसाम् ।  
स्वयं ब्रह्माऽभवद्बुद्धो रुद्रश्चास्य जयाय सः ॥  
ज्ञानात्मकेन हरिणा ब्रह्मात्मनि शिवेऽव्यये ।  
तत्सूत्रमुपवीतत्वाद्ब्रह्मासूत्रमिदं कृतम् ॥

Āśvalāyana quoted in V. M. S., p. 419.

or *svādhyāya*.<sup>1</sup> Yajñopavīta denoted the upper garment when it was worn in the proper manner prescribed for sacred occasions. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* is explicit on the point; it says that Yajñopavīta means wearing the garment in a particular manner; when the garment is passed under the right and over the left shoulder, it becomes Yajñopavīta according to the authority of Brāhmaṇa works.<sup>2</sup> The same garment was called Prachīṇavīta when it was worn exactly in the reverse way, and Nivīta when it was allowed to hang down like a garland.

**Its prehistoric Form :** The upper garment that was thus used was normally a piece of cloth. But in prehistoric times when the art of spinning and weaving was not known, it was a piece of deer-skin. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* states that it should be a piece of deer-skin, rather than a piece of cloth.<sup>3</sup> In the course of time when clothes became common, the upper garment also became a cotton product, but earlier tradition of the deer-skin was in a way preserved by continuing the use of a small patch of deer-skin on such occasions. In later times when Yajñopavīta as a piece of cloth was replaced by Yajñopavīta in the form of the thread, this piece of deer-skin was strung into it. This custom still obtains at the time of Upanayana.

1. उत्तरं वासः कर्तव्यं पञ्चस्वेतेषु कर्मसु ।

स्वाध्यायोत्सर्गदानेषु मुक्ताचमनयोस्तथा ॥

Baudhāyana in SCS, p. 299.

2. वासो विन्यासविशेषो यज्ञोपवीतम् ।

दक्षिणं बाहुमुद्धरतेऽवधत्ते सव्यमिति यज्ञोपवीतमिति ब्राह्मणम् ॥

3. अजिनं वासो वा दक्षिणत उपवीय । II.

**When and how the Thread came in :** In the early period, Yajñopavīta was normally in the form of a full upper garment like the *Dupaṭṭā* of northern India or the *uparāṇe* of Mahārāshtra. *Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra* states distinctly that Yajñopavīta should be normally in the form of the upper garment; wearing a thread instead is only the second alternative.<sup>1</sup> Jātukarṇya quoted in the *Smṛitichandrikā* distinctly declares that Yajñopavīta in the form of the thread is permissible only when the upper garment of the normal size is not available.<sup>2</sup> The view of Rishyaśringa is the same.<sup>3</sup> Yajñopavīta was to be worn on sacred occasions like the sacrifice or the prayer. In the course of time the conception of the sacrifice changed; the whole life came to be viewed as a kind of sacrifice when every thing that one does should be dedicated to the Almighty. If then the Yajñopavīta was to be continuously used during the time one is engaged in sacred duties, it must be worn all the twenty-four hours. This could be feasible only if the Yajñopavīta assumed a more manageable form. It was probably on this account that Yajñopavīta was allowed to dwindle in form into the modern Sacred Thread. The alternatives placed before society were many. Some were in favour of the continuance of the old custom; they held that it was sufficient if the Yajñopavīta was worn as long as prac-

1. नित्यमुत्तरं वासः कार्यम् । अपि वा सूत्रमेवोपवीतार्थे ।

II, 2, 4; 21-22

2. वस्त्रोत्तरीयाभावे द्व्यङ्गुलं त्र्यङ्गुलं चतुरङ्गुलं वा सूत्रैर्वस्त्राकृति  
परिमण्डलं तदुत्तरीयं कुर्यात् SCS p. 84.

3. अपि वा वाससा यज्ञोपवीतार्थं कुर्यात्तदभावे त्रिवृता सूत्रेण ।

Ibid, quoted in SCS p. 84.



licable; it need not be worn continuously for 24 hours.<sup>1</sup> Others were in favour of substituting a Kuṣa rope for the unmanageable upper garment.<sup>2</sup> But Kuṣa rope was not pleasant in touch and so some others advocated that cotton in recommending the new substitutes was convenience and nothing else. For a long time they were not popular; hence we find that in the Upanayana ceremony, as it is described in most of the *Grihyasūtras*, there is no mention of the boy being invested with the Sacred Thread. Instead, we have the description of the boy being offered the *dupaṭṭa* or *uparaṇe* i.e. the upper garment at one stage of the ritual.

### The Number of Sacred Threads increases, why :

In the course of time, however, owing to its obvious convenience, the innovation of the Sacred Thread became popular and its original significance was gradually forgotten. Brahmachāri was to wear only one Sacred Thread, but Snātaka was to wear two, one for the undergarment and the other for the upper garment<sup>3</sup>. It was clearly forgotten by this time that Yajñopavita was intended to be the upper garment. If Snātaka was to wear two Yajñopavitas, the Gṛihastha must wear three, for he was one stage higher. *Grihyasamgraha* however thinks that this third Sacred Thread

1. कापसिक्षीमगोबालशणवल्कतृणोद्भवम् ।

तदसंभवतो धार्यमुपवीतं द्विजातिभिः ॥

*Nigamaparisishṭa in SCS., p. 84.*

2. यज्ञोपवीतं कुरुते सूत्रं वस्त्रं वापि कुशरज्जुमेव वा ।

*Go., Gr. S. II. 2. 4. 22.*

3. अपि वा सूत्रमेवोपवीतार्थे ।

*Āp. Dh. S. II. 2. 4. 22.*

4. स्नातकानां द्वितीयं स्यादन्तर्वास्तथोत्तरम् ।

*Vasishtha in VMS., p. 421.*

was in lieu of the upper garment.<sup>1</sup> Devala also holds the same view ; an upper garment, he says, is not always at hand, hence the recommendation to wear the third Sacred Thread<sup>2</sup>.

**Mysterious efficacy of Yajnopavita :** In the course of time Yajñopavīta came to be invested with mysterious efficacy. The *Āditya Purāṇa* declares that it has the power of destroying demons. When such notions began to prevail in society, it is no wonder that the view began to be advocated that the greater the number of Sacred Threads, the better would be our spiritual and material welfare. Kāśyapa would recommend 2, 3, 5 or 10 Sacred Threads for the house-holder ;<sup>3</sup> an anonymous text quoted by Mitrāmīśra is in favour of as many Sacred Threads as possible<sup>4</sup>. All this vividly shows how the original significance of the Yajñopavīta was completely forgotten by this time. When Yajñopavīta assumed the form of the thread, the custom gained ground of making each of its thread a constituent product of nine smaller threads. Oṅkāra, Agni, Bhaga, Soma, Piṭris, Prajāpati, Vasu, Dharma, and Sarva-devas were taken to be the presiding deities of the nine threads of the Sacred Thread.

**Can Yajnopavita be removed :** Even when the Yajñopavīta dwindled into the Sacred Thread, it could be occasionally removed in the course of the day. The Taittiriya, Kaṭha, Kaṇva and Vajasaneya schools were in favour of permitting the removal

1. तृतीयमुत्तरीयार्थे वस्त्राभावे तदिष्यते । *Ibid*, p. 21.

2. तृतीयमुत्तरीयार्थे वस्त्रालाभे तदिष्यते ॥ *SCS*. d. 301.

3. त्रीणि चत्वारि पञ्चाष्ट गृहिणः स्युर्दशापि वा । *VMS*, p. 421.

4. आयुष्कामैः सदा धार्यं बहुयज्ञोपवीतकम् ॥ 'अन्यत्रापि' in *Ibid*.

of the Sacred Thread at the time of the daily bath;<sup>1</sup> the Rigvedins and the Sāmavedins, however, advocated the doctrine that the Sacred Thread should never be separated from one's person. The latter view eventually prevailed and still obtains in Hindu society.

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1. तैत्तिरीयाः कठाः काण्वाश्वरका वाजसेयिनः ।

कण्ठादुत्तार्यं सूत्रं तु कुर्युर्वै क्षालनं द्विजाः ॥

बह्वृचाः सामगाश्चैव ये चान्ये यजुःशाखिनः ।

कण्ठादुत्तार्यं सूत्रं तु पुनरर्हन्ति संस्क्रियाम् । भृगु in VMS. 427.

### APPENDIX III.

#### CONVOCATION ADDRESSES.

##### *Convocation address to Arts Graduates.*

A specimen of what may be described as a convocation address to Arts Graduates is to be found in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, I, 11. As the passage is very interesting from several points of view, it is given below along with its translation :—

वेदमनुच्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनमनुशास्ति । सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर ।  
स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः । आचार्याय प्रियं धनमाहृत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा  
व्यवच्छेत्सीः । सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । कुशलान्न  
प्रमदितव्यम् । भूतयै न प्रमदितव्यम् । स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रम-  
दितव्यम् । देवपितृकार्याभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् । मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो  
भव । आचार्यदेवो भव । अतिथिदेवो भव । यान्यनवद्यानि कर्म्मणि  
तानि सेवितव्यानि नो इतराणि । यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि तानि त्वयो-  
पास्यानि नो इतराणि । ये के चास्मच्छ्रेयांसो ब्राह्मणः तेषां त्वयाऽसनेन  
प्रश्वसितव्यम् । श्रद्धया देयम् । श्रिया देयम् । ह्रिया देयम् । भिया देयम् ।  
संविदा देयम् । अथ यदि ते कर्मविचिकित्सा वा वृत्तविचिकित्सा वा  
स्यात् ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः युक्ता आयुक्ता अलूक्षा धर्म्मकामाः  
स्युः यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः । अथाम्याख्यातेषु ये तत्र  
ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः युक्ता आयुक्ता अलूक्षा धर्म्मकामाः स्युः यथा ते  
तेषु वर्तेरन् तथा तेषु वर्तेथाः । एष आदेशः । एष उपदेशः । एषा  
वेदोपनिषत् । एतदनुशासनम् । एवमुपासितव्यम् । एवम् चैतदुपास्यम् ।

#### TRANSLATION.

After the teaching of the Veda is over, the preceptor exhorts the student :—

“Speak the truth. Do your duty. Neglect not the daily study ( of the Veda ). After having brought to your teacher his proper reward, do not cut off the line of progeny. Do not swerve from the truth. Do not swerve from duty. Do not neglect what is useful. Do not miss opportunities to become great. Do not neglect the daily duties of learning and teaching ( the Veda ). Do not neglect the (sacrificial) rituals due to the the Gods and Fathers.

Let your mother be to you like unto a god. Let your father be to you like unto a god. Let your teacher be to you like unto a god. Let your guest be to you like unto a god.

Whatever actions are blameless, those should be followed, not others. Whatever good works have been performed by us, those should be emulated by you, not others. And there are some Brahmanas better than we. They should be comforted by you by giving them a seat.

Whatever is given should be given with faith, not without faith,—with joy, with modesty, with fear, with kindness.

If there should be any doubt in your mind with regard to any duty or with regard to conduct,—in that case conduct yourself as Brahmanas, who possess good judgment, conduct themselves therein, whether they be appointed or not, as long as they are not too severe, but devoted to duty. And with regard to things that have been spoken against, conduct yourself as Brahmanas, who possess good judgment, conduct themselves therein, whether they be appointed or not, as long as they are not too severe, but devoted to duty.

Thus conduct your self. This is the rule. This is the teaching. This is the true purport ( Upanishad ) of the Veda. This is the command. Thus should you observe. Thus should this be observed."

*Convocation Address to Medical Graduates.*

We get a very good specimen of the convocation address to medical students in *Charakasaṁhitā* Vimānasthān, 8, 6-8. Important passages from it are given below, along with an English rendering.

अनुज्ञातेन प्रविचरता [ त्वया ] पूर्वं गुर्वर्थोपात्वाहरणो यथाशक्ति प्रयत्नितव्यम् । कर्मसिद्धिमर्थसिद्धिं यशोलाभं प्रत्य च स्वर्गमिच्छता त्वया गोब्राह्मणमादौ कृत्वा सर्वप्राणभृतां शर्माशसितव्यम् । अहरहस्यतिष्ठता चोपविशता च सर्वात्मना चातुराणामारोग्ये प्रयत्नितव्यम् । जीवहेतोरपि चातुरेभ्यो नाभिद्रोघव्यम् । मनसापि च परस्त्रियो नाभिगमनीयास्तथा च सर्वमेव परस्वम् । निभृतवेशपरिच्छदेन भवितव्यम् । अशौण्डेनापापेनापाप-सहायेन च श्लक्ष्णशुक्लधर्म्यशर्म्यधन्यसत्यहितमितवचसा देशकालविचारिणा स्मृतिमता ज्ञानोत्थापनकरणसंपत्सु नित्यं यत्नवता च न कदाचित्..... अनपवादप्रतिकाराणां मुमुक्षूणां चतथैवासन्निहितेश्वरणां स्त्रीणामनव्यक्षाणां चौषधमनुविधातव्यम् । न च कदाचित्स्त्रीदत्तमाभिषमादातव्यमननुज्ञातं भर्त्राथवाध्यक्षेण । आतुरकुलं.....चानुप्रविश्य वाङ्मनोबुद्धी-न्द्रियाणि न क्वचिस्प्रणिष्ठातव्यानि अन्यत्रातुरादातुरोपकारार्थादातुरगतेष्व-श्वेषु वा भावेषु । चातुरकुलप्रवृत्तयो बहिर्निश्चरयितव्याः । हसितं चायुःप्रमाणमातुरस्य न वर्णयितव्यम् जानतापि यत्र यत्रोच्यमानमातुस्या-न्यस्य वाप्युपघाताय संपद्यते ।

विज्ञानवतापि च नात्यर्थमात्मनो ज्ञाने विकल्पितव्यम् । आप्तादपि हि विकल्प्यमानादत्यर्थमुद्विजन्त्येके । न चैव हास्ति सुतरामायुर्वेदस्य पारम् । तस्मादनमत्तः शश्वदभियोगमिच्छन् गच्छेत्..... । कृतस्नो हि लोको बुद्धिमतामाचार्यः । शत्रुश्चाबुद्धिमतामेव । अतश्चाभिसमीक्ष्य बुद्धिमताऽमित्रस्यापि यशस्यं...पौष्टिकं...लौक्यमुपदिशता वचः श्रोतव्य-मनुविधातव्यं चेति ।

## ENGLISH RENDERING

When, on getting permission, you begin to practise, you ought to make an effort to offer an adequate honorarium to your teacher. You should aim at the welfare of Brahmans, cows and all other beings with a view to win practice, prosperity and fame here and in heaven hereafter. Every day you should continuously and whole-heartedly try to promote the health of patients. Even if your own life is in danger, you should not desert your patients. You should not entertain an evil thought about the wealth or wives of others. Your dress should be modest, not foppish. Avoid drinking; do not commit a sin, nor help one who is committing it. Your speech should be smooth, polished, truthful and to the point. Taking all facts into consideration, you should make a deliberate endeavour to increase the stock of your knowledge and instruments. Do not give medicine to those whose disease is definitely ascertained to be incurable, or to those who are about to die, or to women, if their husbands or guardians are not present. Do not accept any fees from ladies without the assent of their husbands or guardians. When you enter a patient's room, all your attention should be centred on the patient, his expression, movements and medicines, to the exclusion of everything else. You must treat as strictly confidential all information about the patient and his family. Where there is a danger of the patient or any of his relatives receiving a shock, you should not divulge the impending death of the patient, even when you are aware of it.

Though well grounded in your line, you should not praise your knowledge much; for some people get disgusted even with their friends and relatives if they are given to boasting. One can never get a mastery

of the entire medical science ; unelated, one should therefore pass one's time in making a constant effort to learn something more. A wise man will indeed gather something from every quarter ; a fool only thinks otherwise, and shows jealousy. Taking all things into consideration, a wise physician should listen to and derive benefit from the discoveries or observations even of an enemy, if they are calculated to promote one's fame and prosperity in this world.



## APPENDIX IV

### FOUR VEDAS, SIX AṅGAS, TEN GRANTHAS, FOURTEEN VIDYĀS, EIGHTEEN ŚILPAS AND SIXTY-FOUR KALĀS.

In connection with the curriculum in ancient India, the above expressions are frequently used ; we therefore propose to explain them briefly in this appendix.

**Four Vedas :** They are the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda and Atharvaveda. These were regarded as revealed, but there was a time when a deep prejudice was entertained against the Atharvaveda, which was therefore excluded from studies. The remaining three Vedas were therefore called *Trayī*.

**Six Angas :** These were the following ; *Śikshā*, the science of pronunciation ; *Kalpa*, the science of ritualism ; *Vyākaraṇa*, grammar ; *Nirukta*, Philology, *Chhandas* prosody, and *Jyotisha*, astronomy.

**Dasa Granthas :** These were the following ; 1 One's own Veda ; 2 Its Brāhmaṇa . 3 Āraṇyaka ; 4 Nighaṇṭu and the six Aṅgas enumerated above. A graduate who had mastered all these, was known as a Daśagranthī Brāhmaṇa.

**Fourteen Vidyas :** During the Pauranic period, a person was regarded as a distinguished scholar if he had mastered fourteen *Vidyās*. These were usually taken to be 1-4 Vedas, 5-10 *Shāḍaṅgas*, 11 *Dharmaśāstra* ( sacred and secular law ), 12 *Purāṇas*, 13 *Mīmāṃsā* ( science of exegis ) and 14 *Tarka* ( logic ),.

**Eighteen Silpas :** There is no authoritative enumeration of eighteen *silpas*. In one place the *Milinda-pañha* includes the four Vedas, the Purāṇas, philosophy, history, etc. among them ( Vol. I, p. 6 ), but there is no doubt that this is wrong. The basic conception of *silpas* is a profession requiring special skill<sup>1</sup> and the Vedic age denoted by this term arts like vocal music, instrumental music and dancing.<sup>2</sup> Taxila university claimed to specialise in eighteen *silpas*, and archery, military art, medicine, magic, snake charming and the art of finding treasures figure among the subjects taught there<sup>3</sup>. These five therefore must have been included in the *silpas*. Conveyancing and law, mathematics, accountancy, agriculture, commerce, cattle-breeding, and *issatha* (?) are also mentioned as *silpas* in the Buddhist literature.<sup>4</sup> When we remember the basic idea of *silpas*, we can include sculpture and engineering also among the traditional eighteen *silpas*. The following therefore most probably constituted the eighteen *silpas*.

1 Vocal music 2 Instrumental music 3 Dancing  
4 Painting 5 Mathematics 6 Accountancy 7 Engineering  
8 Sculpture 9 Agriculture 10 Cattle-breeding  
11 Commerce 12 Medicine 13 Conveyancing and Law  
14 Administrative training 15 Archery and military art  
16 Magic 17 Snake charming and poison antidotes 18 The  
Art of finding hidden treasures.

**Sixty-four Kalas :** According to Kāmasāstra 1, 3.  
16 the following are the traditional sixty-four *Kalās*,

1. एतद्धि दिव्यं शिल्पं न मानुषम् । Kss. XXV, 176:
2. त्रिवृद्धं शिल्पं नृत्यं गीतं वादित्रम् । S. Br. XXIX, 5
3. Jatakas Nos. 80 and 537, *Mahāvagga*, VII. 1. 6, Jātaka Nos. 185, 256 & 416.
4. M. N. Vol. I, p. 85, A. N., Vol. IV pp. 281-2.

which a cultured lady was expected to master :—

१ गीतम् २ वाद्यम् ३ नृत्यम् ४ आलेख्यम् ५ विशेषकच्छेद्यम्  
 ६ तण्डुलकुसुमवलि विकाराः ७ पुष्पास्तरणम् ८ दशनवसनांगरागः ९ मणि-  
 भूमिकाकर्म १० शयनरचनम् ११ उदकवाद्यम् १२ उदकाघातः १३ चित्राश्च  
 योगाः १४ माल्यग्रथनविकल्पाः १५ शेखरकापीडयोजनम् १६ नेपथ्यप्रयोगाः  
 १७ करणपत्रभंगाः १८ गन्धयुक्तिः १९ भूषणयोजनम् २० ऐन्द्रजालाः  
 २१ कौचुमाराश्च योगाः २२ हस्तलाघवम् २३ विचित्रशाकयूषभक्ष्यविकारक्रिया  
 २४ पानकरसरागासवयोजनम् २५ सूचीवानकर्माणि २६ सूत्रक्रीडा  
 २७ वीणाडमरुकवाद्यानि २८ प्रहेलिका २९ प्रतिमाला ३० दुर्वाचकयोगाः  
 ३१ पुस्तकवाचनम् ३२ नाटकाख्यायिकादर्शनम् ३३ काव्यसमस्यापूरणम्  
 ३४ पट्टिकावेत्रवानविकल्पः ३५ तक्षकर्माणि ३६ तक्षणम् ३७ वास्तुविद्या  
 ३८ रूप्यरत्नपरीक्षा ३९ धातुवादः ४० मणिरागाकरज्ञानम् ४१ वृक्षायुर्वेदयोगाः  
 ४२ मेषकुक्कुटलावकयुद्धविधिः ४३ शुकसारिकाप्रलापनम् ४४ उत्सादने  
 संवाहने केशमर्दने च कौशलम् ४५ अक्षरमुष्टिकाकथनम् ४६ म्लेच्छित-  
 विकल्पाः ४७ देशभाषाविज्ञानम् ४८ पुष्पशटिका ४९ निमित्तज्ञानम्  
 ५० यन्त्रमातृका ५१ धारणामातृका ५२ सम्पाटयम् ५३ मानसोकाव्यक्रियाः  
 ५४ अभिधानकोशः ५५ छन्दोज्ञानम् ५६ क्रियाकल्पः ५७ छलितकयोगाः  
 ५८ वस्त्रगोपनानि ५९ द्यूतविशेषः ६० आकर्षक्रीडा ६१ बालक्रीडनकानि  
 ६२-४ वैजयिकीनां वैजयिकीनां व्यायामिकीनां च विद्यानां ज्ञानम् ।

Owing to want of space it is not possible to explain the meaning of each of the 64 *kalās* enumerated above. It would suffice to say that Nos. 23-4 refer to the art of cooking, Nos. 5, 8, 15 and 44 to personal toilets of women requiring skill in the use of ointments for the body, paints for the teeth, etc. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 27 enumerate fine arts like music, dancing and painting. Arts necessary for home and personal decorations are mentioned in Nos. 6, 7, 9, 10, 14-19, 48 and 58 and they include garland making, decoration of the floor, the preparation of the bed,

proper use and care of dress and ornaments etc. Women, who were usually fond of ornaments, were expected to be able of appreciate correctly the value and quality of the different varieties of gold, etc., and Nos. 38-40 refer to the capacity in this connection. Arts useful for the housewife like sewing, patching, elementary carpentry, repairs of household tools and articles are mentioned in Nos. 25, 33, 35-7, 41, and 49. Literary efficiency and skill of different variety is presupposed by Nos. 28-31, 33, 45-47 and 51-57. They require women to be skilled in reading, writing, understanding different languages, composing poems, understanding dramas, etc. Nos. 12 and 64 refer to different physical exercises and Nos. 11, 20, 22, 26, 42, 43, 57, 59, 60 mention recreations for utilising leisure hours. The latter include magic, sleights of hand, *dyuta* etc. No. 61 requires every woman to know how to prepare toys for children.

It will be thus seen that the 64 arts, which a woman was expected to master, endowed her with a healthy physique, taught her all arts necessary for an economic and an efficient housewife and made her a cultured companion of her husband, who could introduce her to any company of educated men and women. It is obvious that only ladies in higher sections of society could have got proficiency in 64 arts. What was their percentage we do not know.

## APPENDIX V

### Technical terms and dates of authors, works and kings.

(A=Author ; K=King ; D=Date ; Q=Queen)

Agrahâra; a village of learned Brahmana colonists.	Chandragupta Maurya c. 303 B. C.
Alberni: Arabic A., c. 1025 A. D.	Chandragupta Gupta ; c. 400 A. D.
Āpastamba, D. S.; c. 400 B. C.	Divākarasena ; sage, c. 610 A. D.
Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya, c. 300 B. C.	Diddā ; Q, c. 1000 A. D.
Āśramas; four stages of life.	Dharmasūtras ; c. 600 B.C. to 300 B. C.
Bāṇa; poet, c. 625 A. D.	Fa Hien; Chinese pilgrim in India in c. 400 A. D.
Brāhmaṇa literature consists of explanations of and commentaries on the Vedas ; c. 1500 B. C. to 1000 B. C.	Gāthāsaptasatī ; c. 2nd century A. D.
Bhāskarāchārya; A.; c.1150 A. D.	Gauḍapāda ; philosopher, c. 700 A. D.
Bhavabhūti ; poet ; c. 725 A. D.	Gautama, D.S., c. 400 B.C.
Bhoja ; Paramāra K. c. 1025 A. D.	Gāyatrī Mantra ; see p. 301-3.
Brahmachāri ; student observing celibacy.	Grihyasūtras ; c. 700 B. C. to 500 B. C.
Brahmacharya, the state of a Brahmachāri.	Gupta age ; c. 300 to 500 A. D.
Buddha died in c. 487 B.C.	Gurukula, see p. 32.
Chālukya Dynasty, Later ; 973 to 1187 A. D.	Harsha ; K., 606-647 A. D.
Charaka ; An author on medicine, c. 80 A. D.	Harshacharit c. 625 A. D.
	Hīnayāna ; a branch of Buddhism, advocating its earlier philosophy. Its literature is mostly in Pāli.

- Homa; sacrifice to gods.  
Indo-Iranian age ; c. 2500 B. C.
- Ikshvākudynasty of Āndhra country, c. 200 A. D.
- I-tsing ; Chinese traveller in India in c. 675 A. D.
- Janaka, K. in Upanishads ; c. 800 B. C.
- Jātaka period ; c. 500 B. C.
- Jayachandra ; K., c. 1190 A. D.
- Kadamba dynasty ; c. 300 A. D. to 600 A. D.
- Kālidāsa; 4th century A. D. according to some and 1st century B. C. according to others.
- Kanishka; K., c. 100 A. D.
- Kaṇva dynasty; c. 50 B. C.
- Karman theory holds that we become what we deserve to be by our past actions.
- Kaṭha republic; c. 350 B. C.
- Kauṭilya ; author of the *Arthaśāstra*; c. 300 B. C.
- Kumārāgupta ; K., c. 425 A. D.
- Lakshmaṇasena ; K. of Bengal, c. 1200 A. D.
- Mahāyāna; a later school of Buddhism, which deified the Buddha and wrote its works in Sanskrit.
- Mahābhārata ; book. c. 300 B. C.
- Mahābhārata war ; c. 1400 B. C.
- Mālatimādhva drama ; c. 725 A. D.
- Mālava republic; c. 300 B.C. to 200 A. D.
- Maṇḍanamisra ; A. c. 800 A. D.
- Mantra ; sacred verse or formula.
- Manusmṛiti ; c. 200 B. C.
- Mauryan age; 325 to 190 B.C.
- Milindapaṇḥā, a book; c. 1st century B. C. or A. D.
- Mīmāṃsā school of philosophy deals with Vedic exegis and sacrifices.
- Muñja; K., c. 980 A. D.
- Nāgārjuna; Mahāyāna philosopher, c. 150 A. D.
- Naishṭhika Brahmachāri observed celibacy to the end of his life.
- Nirukta ; a work on Vedic exegis ; c. 700 B. C.
- Nyāya philosophy mainly deals with the problems of logic.
- Pallava dynasty ; c. 300 to 750 A. D.
- Pāṇini; famous grammarian; c. 7th century B. C.
- Pāṭhaśālā; Sanskrit school.
- Patwari; village accountant.
- Punarjanma ; rebirth.
- Purāṇas were given their present form in c 350 A. D., though there are some later additions too.
- Rāmāyaṇa ; c. 200 B. C.

- Rājasekhara ; poet, c. 900 A. D.
- Sālivāhana dynasty ; also known as Śātavāhana dynasty c. 200 B. C. to 200 A. D.
- Samāvartana ceremony ; at the end of the education course.
- Samgha ; Buddhist order of monks.
- Sāṃkhya philosophy is atheistic and advocates that matter and souls are the only two entities.
- Sandhyā ; morning and evening Vedic prayer.
- Śaṅkarāchārya ; the great Advaitic philosopher, c. 800 A. D.
- Sanskāra ; ritual.
- Śibi republic in c. 300 B. C.
- Śindhurāja ; K. c. 1000 A.D.
- Smṛitis, metrical books on sacred law ; c. 200 A. C. to 800 A. D.
- Snāna ; see Samāvartana.
- Śrāddha ; oblations offered to a dead ancestor on the date of his death.
- Sugandhā · Q. of Kashmir, c. 900 A. D.
- Śunga dynasty ; c. 190 to 80 B. C.
- Suśruta ; a work on medicine. Tol ; a Sanskrit school on traditional lines.
- Upākarma ; see pp. 307-10
- Upanayana ceremony for initiating a student into Vedic studies.
- Upanishadic period ; c. 1000 to 600 B. C.
- Uttararāmacharit drama ; c. 725 A. D.
- Utsarjana ; see p. 310
- Vaiśeshika philosophy mainly deals with atomism and logic.
- Vasubandhu ; Mahāyāna philosopher, c. 300 A.D.
- Vedaṅgas ; see App. IV.
- Vedānta philosophy ; mainly based on Upanishads and amplified by Śankara, Rāmānuja and others.
- Vikramāditya VI ; Chālukya emperor, c. 1100 A. D.
- Vrata ; religious vow.
- Yama Smṛiti ; c. 8th century A. D.
- Yoga philosophy concentrates on meditation and Prāṇāyama.
- Yuan Chwang ; Chinese pilgrim in India in c. 640 A. D.

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—: o :—



## INDEX

### A

- Admission procedure, 84  
 Admission test, 84, 120-1.  
*Agrahāra* villages as centres of education, 141-44.  
 Aims of education ; 8-21 ; how far achieved, 236-42  
*Aksharasvikaṇṇa*, a Sanskāra, 288-91  
 Alberuni, on Brahmagupta's dishonesty, 246; on Hindu scholarship, 256-7 ; on vernacular education, 254.  
 Al-idrisi on Indian character 239  
 Alms, for students, compulsory for householders, 95.  
*Annaprāśana*, a Sanskāra, 289  
 Apprentice system, 200-3 ; 276; in Europe, 203 n. 2.  
 Arabs, borrow Hindu medicine system, 189 ; on Hindu character, 239  
 Arts and crafts, training in, 200-203, attitude towards, 200, 251-2  
 Āryabhaṭa on eclipse, 246  
*Āśramas* as education centres, 33-4  
 Association, 30.  
 Ayurvedic Upanayana, 314-5  
 Astronomy and astrology, 154, 246

### B

- Banaras, as education centre, 112-116.  
 Begging, see under *Bhikshā-charana*,  
*Bhikshā*, for students, compulsory for householders, 95  
*Bhikshācharana*, how far real in daily life, 65-68; why prescribed, 66; when a disgrace, 67  
 Boarding arrangements, 76.  
*Brahmachāri* his paraphernalia, 303-4. See under Student for further information.  
*Brahmacharya*, its duration, 91, rules of, 68-70  
 Brahmagupta, his intellectual dishonesty, 246  
 Brahmanas, and Veda teaching, 41; as teachers of non-Vedic subjects, 42, as teachers, consequence of; 243-4  
 Broad-based course, 254-6-285  
 Buddhism and education, 228-35  
 Buddhist Universities, organisation of, 76-7.  
 Buildings of schools and colleges, 78-9.

## C

- Capitals, as education centres, 105.
- Caste system, its influence on education, 40-6; and Buddhism, 47-8; and Upanayanatime, 296; and Śāvitṛī Mantra; 301-2; and professions, 40-1.
- Character, formation of, 10-11, 68-9; Indian, estimate of, 237-42
- Chaula* and primary education, 289.
- Chhurikābandha*, 316
- Civic duties, and education, 242.
- Classes, their strength, 84-5
- Coeducation, 214
- College session, its duration; 87-8.
- Colleges as organised institutions, non-existent in early times, 73-4; and at Taxila, 109; and Banaras, 112; but existing at Nālandā, 116-8; Vikramasilā, 127-9, Ennāyirum; 135-6, Tirumukkudul, 136, Tiruvorriyur, 137; Salotgi, 133-4
- Commercial education, 198-200
- Corporal punishment, 27-28
- Courses, their duration, 91-93, their organisation, 90-91.
- Craft, skill in, 278
- Cramming, 164, 271

- Creative vein disappears,
- Critical reflection, 248-9  
period of, 274
- Culture, preservation of, an aim of education, 17-19; 241-2
- Curriculum, literary, in early Vedic period, 145-7; in late Vedic period, 147-8; during 1000 B. C. to c. I A. D., 149-51, during 1-1200 A. D., 150-59; in Buddhist institutions, 157-8; 232-4.

## D

- Danda* of the Brahmachārin, 303.
- Debates, 166.
- Debts, three, 18.
- Degrees, 171-2.
- Dhanurvedic Upanayana, 315
- Dharmasāstra age, education in, 268-78.
- Dialogues in education, 272.
- Discipline, rules of, 68-71  
269-70.
- Doctors, status of, 192

## E

- Eclipse, 246.
- Education, conception of 3-8; aims of, 8-20; aims of, elsewhere, 20-1; and how far achieved, 237-42; when to commence 26, 283-84; to whom to be given and to whom not, 54-5; how far free, 80-83; in post-college

- life, 26-7; through private individuals for a long time, 73; system, not other-worldly, 243; characterised by depth, but not equally by breadth, 254-5; religious bias in India and Europe, 242; effect of religion's influence in India, 243-8; and in Europe 249; system becomes deteriorated 257-8; general estimate, 286-7; centres; varieties of, 105; primary, female and useful, see under Primary education, Female education and Useful education respectively.
- Educational finance, 94-104.
- Educational institutes, rise of 75 and 280.
- Ennayiram temple college, 133-6.
- Examinations, 168-70, 273-4.
- Exposition, 164-5; 271-2.
- F
- Family, and education, 35-6.
- Fees, 80-83; in ancient Greece, 81 n. 1.
- Female education and family 36; two classes of girl students, 210; co-education, 214; Upanayna and Vedic studies of girls, 209; 217-8; attainments of lady scholars, 210-11; in Buddhism 212; 233; extent of, 215; in cultured families, 222; in ruling families 223-4; and economic independence, 225-6; in Muslim period, 226-7; and Jainism, 227.
- Fine arts, training in, 203-4; and women, 220.
- Foreign scholars, attitude towards, 250-1.
- Foreign travel, 250.
- Forests, as centres of education, 33.
- G
- Gāyatrī Mantra*, 301-3.
- Girdle, its significance, 298
- Government, recruits, scholars for its posts, 98; patronises distinguished scholars and colleges, 100; gives land grants 100; cash grants, 100; taxation exemptions and other concessions to scholars, 100-3; does not control education, 101-2; in the West, and education, 102-4.
- Grammar study 154.
- Greek education at Taxila, 108.
- Greeks on Hindu character, 238.
- Grihanishkramaṇa*, a Sanskṛa, 289.

Guilds in India and useful education, 201-3.

Guṇavarman, 132.

*Guru*, see under teacher.

*Gurudakṣiṇā*, 80-1.

*Gurukula* system, 30-2.

## H

Habit, importance of, 29.

Harun Khalifa, invites Hindu doctors, 191.

Hereditary professions, their effect on education, 197-9.

Heritage, ancient, its preservation an aim of education, 17-18, 241.

Holidays, 88-89.

Home education, 35-6.

Home work, 65.

Hospitals, 189, combined with colleges 139.

Hours of school, 85-7

## I

Ibn Batuta, on Hindu character, 239.

Income of teachers, 57-8.

Individual attention, 167, 272

Industrial training, attitude towards, 200-1; efficiency of, 205; deteriorates in medieval times, 206.

Interdining 41.

Intellect, when creative, 248; when assimilative, 249.

## J

Jesuitical education, 249.

Judgment, power of, in students, 15.

## K

*Kalās*, 64, App. IV.

Kalas college, 141.

*Karman* theory, 38.

Kashmir as centre of learning, 131-3; its intercourse with Central Asia, 132.

*Kharag-bandhāi*, 316.

Kindergarten stage, 174.

Kings, their duty to patronise learning, 98; specific instances of, as patrons of learning, 99; assumed no patronising attitude, 102; see also under Government.

Kshatriyas, their *Upanayana* and Vedic studies, 44.

## L

Lady teachers, 213.

Laymen, education of, 158.

Learning respect for, 97-8.

Libraries, 121, 126, 139.

Life-long students, 94.

Limitation, law of, and students, 101.

Literacy, extent of, 177, 182, 184; in ancient Athens and Sparta and Medieval Europe, 253-4.

Logic, courses in, 156.

Luther, on state's duty to help education, 103; first encourages but later discourages reason, 247-8.

M

- Malkapuram temple college, 139.  
 Marco Polo, on Indian character, 239.  
 Marriage time, 218-9 and student life, 25.  
 Masses, education of, 252-3,  
*Medhājanana*, a ritual, 304.  
 Medical education, 187-93;  
 and women, 222; 277.  
 Megasthenes, on Indian character, 238.  
*Mekhalā*, 298.  
 Method of teaching, see, under Teaching.  
 Middle Ages, a period of intellectual repression, 249-50.  
 Military education, 193-6.  
 Monastic colleges, administration of, 75-7, 129.  
 Monasteries, as centres of education, 76-7, 116-31; in Europe and education, 76.  
 Monitorial system, 168-9; 273.  
 Monks, courses for, 157-8.  
 Muslim rule, its effect on Hindu education, 185, 256-7.

N

- Naishṭhika Brahmachari*, 94.  
 Nālandā University, 116-125;  
 its rise and progress, 116-7; its lay-out, 117; boarding arrangements, 118; number of students, 119; its curriculum, 122;

its standard of admission, 120; its libraries, 121; its fame in Java and Tibet, 123-4; how destroyed, 125.

- Night classes, 87,  
 Nature and Nurture, their influence on education, 37-40.  
 Non-Brahmanas, as Vedic teachers, 41.  
 Non-Vedic studies, 274.

O

- Originality disappears, 248.

P

- Painting, training in 203-4, 276.  
 Parables, 272.  
 Pauranic age, education in, 278-279.  
 Personality, development of, as aim of education, 12-13, 240-1.  
 Peshva, his help for education, 100.  
 Philosophy, study, of, 157.  
 Physical exercises, 65.  
 Physical punishment, 27-8; 269.  
*Pitṛirina* theory, and education, 18.  
 Poetesses, 221-2.  
 Poetry course, the study in, 155.  
 Prakrit, during 200 B. C.—300 A. D., 153-4; development of, arrested, 155; in primary educa-



tion, 184; effect of the neglect of, 252-3.  
 Pre-school education, 35-6.  
 Priests as teachers, in India, 40-2, in Enrope, 76.  
 Primary education, upto 1000 B.C., 174-6; during 1000-200 B. C., 176-7; during 200 B. C.—800 A. D., 178-80; during 800 A. D.—1200 A. D., 183-86; why not once important, 173; and Buddhism, 233-4.  
 Principles of education,  
 Private teachers, 22-35 78; and fees, 81.  
 Promotions, 170-2.  
 Punishment, physical, limitations on, 27-8.  
 Punjab, condition of education in, at c. 1850 A. D., 97-8.  
 Purāṇas, study of, 154-57; reverence for, 250.  
 Princes, education of 196-8  
 Princesses, education of, 223-5

## R

Raghu, a king, his concern for education 83 n. 2.  
 Rāhu-Ketu theory of eclipses, 246-7.  
 Rationalism, properly cultivated in early times, 278; discouraged in later days, 245; its effect on research, 246; discouraged in Europe also in Medieval times, 247.

Religion, its influence on education, 9; gives rise to educational rituals like *Vidyārambha*, 289; *Upanayana* 291; *Upākarma*, 307; does not make education other-worldly, 243; helps education, 94-5; discourages reason, 245-6; discourages secular studies, 243-4.

Reservation of seats for subjects in colleges, 135-7  
 Rituals, educational, App.1.  
 Routine, importance of, 29; 269.

## S

Sacred Thread, App. II, A.  
 Salaries of teachers, 136; 57-58.  
 Salotgi temple college, 133-4.  
*Samāvartana*, a privilege of the few, but later extended to all, 311; ceremony described, 312; of Dhanurveda students, 316.  
 Sanskrit, ascendancy of, 153-4; its effect on Prakrits, 154-5; and on the spread of education, 253-4; courses in, 155.  
 Sarvajñapura *Agrahāra* college, 142.  
*Sattras* for the poor students 96.  
*Sāvitri-Mantra*, 301-4.

- School hours, 85-6.
- Self-confidence and students, 13-4.
- Self-respect encouraged in students, 13.
- Self-restraint and student life, 14.
- Shāḍaṅgas*, 328.
- Sippas* or branches of useful education, 329.
- Ship-building, 205.
- Smṛiti age, education in, 151-60; 268-78.
- Smritis, study of, 155; reverence for, 246;
- Snāna*, see under *Samāvartana*.
- Social efficiency, as aim of education, 15-16.
- Society, its help for education, 95-7; makes provision for poor students; 96.
- Sources, 2-3.
- Srāvāṇi*, why so called, see under *Upākarma*.
- Staff of the students, 303-4
- State, see under Government.
- Strabo on Indian character, 238.
- Spinning, and women, 225-6
- Students, their duties towards teachers, 59-61; how far working in their teachers' houses, 60-61; their relations with their teachers in after-life, 63, their marriages with teachers' daughters, 63; daily routine of their life, 64-5; their duty to beg, how far discharged, 65-67; general rules for their life, 68-9; how far staying with their teachers, 30.1; boarding arrangements for, 79; and marriage, 25, 216-7; free boarding for. 118, 134-137.
- Shudras and Vedic studies, 45-6.
- Surgery, training in, 188-9.
- Svetaketu on post-collegiate education, 308.
- T
- Taxila, as centre of education, 106-12; its early history, 106; Greek influence over, 107-8; not a University of the modern type, 109; its all-India fame, 110; boarding arrangements, 110; subjects taught at, 111; how destroyed, 112.
- Taxation, exemption from, 101
- Teacher, his importance, 49; regarded as a spiritual father, 56; why venerated, 50; his training, 52-3; qualifications of, 53; usually a householder, 33; his income, 57-8; 137; 143; his caste, 41-2; his relations with students, 61-2; must not delay education, 54;

- must not stipulate for fees, 80; must take filial care of students, 56; must not withhold anything from students, 55; domestic work in his house, 60; his high code of honour, 54; his power of inflicting physical punishment, 27-8; daughters of, marrying students, 62-3; women as, 213
- Teaching, method of, in Vedic period, 146-47; 148. 262-3; in Upanishadic period, 265; in Dharmasāstra period, 271-3; in Vedic classes, 161; in primary schools, 179; the place of cramming in, 164; and of exposition, 164-5; individual attention in, 167; senior students' help in; 168.
- Temple colleges, 77, 132-41
- Text books, competition for, 153-59.
- Tibet and Nālandā scholars, 124; and Vikramasīlā scholars, 128.
- Tirthas* as centres of education, 106.
- Tirumukkudal temple college, 136.
- Tiruvorriyur temple college, 137.
- Tols*, 143.
- Tonsure, 289.
- Training colleges for teachers, 52.
- Treasure-trove laws, 101.
- U
- Ugrabhūti, his efforts to get his book prescribed, 159.
- Universities, 75-6; 119.
- Upādhyāyā*, 213.
- Upākarma*, at the beginning of the college term, 307-8; why extended to all, 308; description of, 309; and the sacred thread, 310.
- Upanayana*, its antiquity, 293; meaning of, 291-3; when performed, 295-8; performed by married men, 292; a simple ritual, 292; when and why made compulsory 291; as the second birth, 50; why prescribed for the dumb and deaf, 292; why prescribed as a *Prāyaścitta* 292; of Asvattha tree. 293; critical survey of 298-300; significance of the presentation to deities in, 299; presentation to the teacher in, 299-301 teaching of the *Sāvitrī mantra* in, 301; significance of the whole ritual, 305; of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, 44; of women, 207-14; for *Āyurveda* students, 313; for *Dhanurveda* students, 315.

Upanishad age, education  
in, 148-50; 264-8.

*Utsarjana* ceremony, at the  
end of the session, 310.

## V

Vacation, 88.

Vaishyas, their Upanayana  
and Vedic studies, 44-5.

Valabhi as a centre of edu-  
cation, 125-7.

Varāhamihira on eclipses,  
246; on Greeks' achieve-  
ments in astronomy, 250.  
Vedic period, education  
in, 260-4.

Vedic study how far a mere  
cramming, 147-52; in  
different periods, 147-52;  
falling into background,  
152; during 1-1200 A.D.,  
152-4; and Kshatriyas,  
Vaishyas and Shudras,  
45-46.

Vernaculars, education in,  
253-4; in Europe, 254;  
282; 285.

Veterinary science, 193.

*Vidyas*, 14, App. IV.

Vidyārambha Sanskāra,  
288-9.

Vikramaśilā monastic col-  
lege, 127-8.

## W

Wastage in education, 308.

Women, status of, 215-16.

*Upanayana* of, 207; 216;  
as teachers, 213; as  
poetesses, 220-1; as Vedic  
seers, 206; as governors,  
224; and medical studies,  
222; scholars mentioned  
in *Brahmayajna*, 212;  
literacy among, 215, 226-  
7; age at the marriage  
of, 207; and military  
training, 222, their econo-  
mic position, 228.

Work, in teachers' houses,  
60-1.

## Y

*Yojnopavita*, originally an  
upper garment of skin,  
then of cloth, 317-8:  
how supplanted by the  
thread, 319; could be  
removed, 321.

Yuan Chwang, on Indian  
character, 238-39.

## Z

Zemindar, and Sanskrit  
*Pāṭhaśālas*, 143-4.







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